Photo *Cribb.*

A FUTURE "BOBS."

Tommy, loq.:

"'Bobs' says that every boy should learn
To fire a gun an' take his turn.
If I shoot straight before I'm ten,
I guess I'll lead some soldiers then."

J. M.

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BEFORE THE CHARGE.

From the painting by Raymond Desvarreux.

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FROM THE STALLS

Photo *Lallie Charles.*

MISS MURIEL BEAUMONT.

One of Fortune's Favourites.

Miss Muriel Beaumont (Mrs. Gerald du Maurier) seems to possess the happy faculty of bringing luck wherever she goes. Most of the pieces she has played in have had very long runs.

In "The Admirable Crichton" she gained two important things—a stage reputation and a husband. It was during the course of this piece that she was won by Mr. du Maurier, son of the famous author of "Trilby."

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

MARIE STUDHOLME.

A Popular Gaiety Actress.

Lord Roberts' horror of cats is equalled by Miss Marie Studholme's detestation of geese.

Miss Studholme has good reason for her pet antipathy. When quite a small child she was attacked by a flock of geese belonging to her grandfather, down in her native Yorkshire. They pecked her little bare legs and beat her with their wings until, when nearly dead with fright, she reached a place of safety.

Her first part was in some prize day school theatricals. She was cast for a boy, but, to her intense disappointment, she was not permitted to appear in proper boy's attire, but was consigned to a long and most unbecoming ulster.

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Photo *Lallie Charles.*

HAZEL THOMPSON.

An Actress of Many Parts.

"I really forget what I have done," said Miss Hazel Thompson. But on further pressure Miss Thompson recollected that she had taken leading parts in "The Last of the Dandies," "Are You a Mason?" and added that she would shortly be touring in "Raffles." "I have scarcely any time for private life," she says, "and what little time I have is mostly spent in learning Greek. Greek plays interest me so tremendously." She loves playing for the Court Theatre, as one never knows what is coming on next!

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Photo *Dover Street Studios.*

DAN ROLYAT.

A Serious Comedian.

One does not naturally associate a love of religious literature and religious argument with a comedian. Mr. Dan Rolyat, however, who is helping to make th ngs go with a bang in "The Dairymaids," confesses to a taste for such things. He says: "Any book that attempts to be funny puts me off at once. I am fondest of Shakespeare, and have made a determined but futile struggle with 'Paradise Lost!' My ambition is to play parts in which I don't have to kick myself to death."

Mr. Rolyat has broken his collar-bone on the stage, and put out each ankle four times. He earns his money.

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IRENA de LANGLOIS.

A Rising Star.

Miss Irena de Langlois is not quite seventeen years old. Already she has made great strides in her profession, her acting in "Castles in Spain" being a huge success. When not working at singing exercises she 'crams' modern languages.

Photo *Bassano.*

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Photo *Clarke & Hyde.*

FRANK CUMMINGER.

The Champion Sand Dancer.

The true sand dance is probably one of the quaintest and most extraordinary dances known. The striking effects are produced by gliding the feet over a sanded surface, instead of raising them. It is a difficult art to keep time with the music by the grating sound of shoes on sand. Frank Cumminger is undoubtedly the champion of this art. He established a record of over eleven minutes' continuous dancing recently at the Pavilion. This eleven minutes was time enough for Cumminger to make upwards of 3300 beats. In person he is one of the nicest fellows imaginable. He is an Octoroon, tall and slim, and his dancing keeps him in a perpetually trained state.

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Photo *Dover Street Studios.*

MISS RUTH ST. DENIS

In the "Cobra Dance."

Miss Ruth St. Denis, the clever girl who has created such a sensation in London in Indian dances, is an American. She made her *début* in this country at the Aldwych Theatre, and has since danced privately at many of the big houses in London, notably at the Duchess of Manchester's.

The photo represents her in her famous "Cobra Dance." Upon the first and fourth fingers of each hand she wears rings with large green stones which glitter like the eyes of serpents. Her arms are extraordinarily graceful and sinuous, and in the evolutions of the dance seem like snakes coiling and writhing about her neck and body.

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Photo *Hemus Surony.*

La Milo as Herself.

Photo *Dover Street Studios.*

La Milo as Diana.

LA MILO (Miss Pansy Montague)

The Impersonator of Statues.

The management that brought Miss Pansy Montague over from Australia suffered much apprehension that their enterprise would be prohibited by the much dreaded L.C.C. They attribute their escape to the fact that a reporter, in a prominent morning paper, described the "turn" as extremely tame and uninteresting. The great British public apparently do not share this opinion, for they crowd in their thousands to see La Milo.

La Milo was once being photographed in the early morning on a pedestal in an Australian park. The photographers had to leave her to fetch something, when, to her dismay, people began to walk by on their way to business. Her pose was so natural, however, that no one ever suspected the statue was other than marble.

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A Wayward Maiden.

How Love Proved Stronger Than Gold.

By Mrs. Neish.

Ronald was looking very gloomy.

"Isn't it a lovely day?" I said, by way of cheering him.

"Very," he replied; but, judging by his tone, it might as well have been a fog.

"Are you coming in to tea?"

He shook his head. "No thanks, Miss Marjorie."

"Engaged?"

"Eh?" He started, and then pulled himself together. "May I walk home with you?" he said gravely. "I want to speak to you."

Poor old Ronie, he was so deeply in love with Nella—the very word engaged had made him start—and she, my wilful and spoilt sister Nella, was playing a cruel game with him. I felt very angry with her, because I knew she really loved him, but she had been so spoilt I was more than half afraid she would throw away her own happiness. I determined to go home and lecture her severely—if I could bring myself to be severe with Nella, whom we all adore and whom I fear I have helped to spoil.

Cuckoo! rejoiced the mocking-bird, cuckoo! cuckoo!

A breath of joy was in the very air to-day, and little buds unfolding hourly, added their trembling leaves to the growing world of green; but Ronie's mood was clearly out of harmony with the genial air of rejoicing Nature. I said nothing, but only waited for him to tell me what was the matter.

"Miss Marjorie, I think I shall go abroad."

"Why, Ronie?"

"Well, you know I am—I mean—" he flushed hotly—"you know how I love your sister——"

"I know," I said gently, "and why should that make you go abroad?"

"She doesn't care for me," he blurted out in his frank, boyish way, "and it's no use my waiting here and seeing her marry that—" he suppressed himself, and added "seeing her marry Sir James."

"Pah!" I said, "Nella isn't likely to marry Sir James, she doesn't even really like him."

Ronie's face brightened, and then it fell again.

"I am afraid she does," he said despondently. "I don't know, of course, but she was so nice to him yesterday, and then I was rude to her and she was very angry, and said she'd never marry me."

"Nella is never angry for long," I said, with a view to comfort.

"You are so good," he murmured, "such a brick, Miss Marjorie. I have written to her—I mean about being such a sulky brute last night, but if she won't forgive me, I shall go away."

"That's right," I said cheerfully, "and then you'll soon forget her."

"I shall never forget her," said Ronie hotly.

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"Never is a long day," I said to myself, as I smiled at the enthusiasm of youth, and yet even while I smiled, I sighed, for who could ever forget our Nella.

* * * * *

"Listen," said Nella peremptorily, "listen Marjorie," and she came and seated herself on a low stool at my feet and rested her pretty head against my knee—"look—you may read this if you like," and she handed me poor Ronie's letter.

It was a boyish and adoring little note, and like Ronie himself, was expressed in simple rather than ideal language:

I know, dearest, you were very angry last night, and I've felt inclined to blow my brains out ever since. Do forgive me and be friends again. I am afraid I was rude, but I can't bear to see you even look as you did at that fat ass Sir James Murchison—and yet I adore you so—will you be out this evening, and—if not, may I come in after dinner?

Yours for ever and ever,

RONALD.

P.S.—I adore you.

Nella looked half coquettishly at me. "Don't you think that's a very nice letter?"

"It's a very nice letter, and just like him," I said, "but why do you tease him so, Nell? Why do you look at Sir James Murchison at all?"

"A cat may look at a king," smiled Nella.

"True," I agreed, "but you are neither a cat—nor is Sir James a king, not in any way," I added with some malice, for Sir James was not a favourite of mine, and I don't think you ought to encourage Ronie unless you really mean to marry him."

I feel obliged to scold Nella, as she has only me to look after her.

"I don't know that I mean to marry anyone," she answered pettishly. "Why, you said yourself only the other day you thought I was far too young."

"I know, my pet," I interrupted; "but you *are* encouraging Ronie."

"Not more than I am encouraging Sir James. I'm just as nice to him, Marjie." And Nella raised her blue eyes candidly to mine. "I'm really just as nice to him—"

"But that's much worse, Nell," I said severely. "In the first place he is old—a horrid old man—and then it is being a flirt. I do hope you're not going to turn out a flirt."

Nella rose and began to hum a little tune; then she bent over my table and pulled a rose that grew outside, and tried it first against her face and then her hair.

"They're too pale. May I have this red one, or are you going to wear it? Thank you, darling; then I'll put it on for dinner. Sir James is coming, so I'm going to try to look my best." And Nella began to hum again as she took the rose and left the room.

* * * * *

Nella, looking very childish and lovely, came into my bedroom from her own. Her hair was loose about her shoulders, and fell in waving masses far below her waist, and the soft folds of her long, white dressing-gown showed to perfection the graceful figure.

"Marjie, I want to talk to you," she said, half-peremptorily and half-coaxingly.

"Yes, Nella." I spoke rather coldly.

"Do be nice," she pleaded.

"I think you behaved extremely badly during dinner," I said severely—"and worse still afterwards, wandering about all the evening with Sir James in the garden. Poor Ronie was perfectly miserable."

"I didn't enjoy it a bit, either," said Nella lightly, "the summer-house was full of earwigs."

"I don't know why you wanted to sit in the summer-house at all," I said coldly.

"I suppose I may sit where I like with my future husband," said Nella, with a sudden immense assumption of dignity.

I looked at her in amazement.

"Nella—you don't mean it," I gasped, "you really don't mean it. Not an old man like that."

"He's not old. He's only fifty."

"He's old compared with you," I said hotly—"you're only a baby of twenty, and he's not a nice man, either. No one likes him here, and he's conceited, and he'll never let you have your own way."

"Yes he will," said Nella, "because I shall take it—so there! and I am going to be engaged after all—so there! and he asked me to-night, and I told him I didn't care for him, and only wanted to be rich; but he says he does not mind that in the least, as I shall soon grow to love him if I live with him, but I know I shan't," she added in her emphatic, childish way.

Suddenly she knelt by my side, and with one of the pretty gestures that come so naturally to her, she pulled my face down close to hers.

"Oh, Marjie, I feel such a wretch, for I don't care a bit about him, and I do so love old Ronie; but I can't be poor, I really can't."

"But Ronie isn't poor," I protested angrily.

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"No, not very poor; but he's not rich, and I want to be rich. I want the Hall, and the garden; all the Murchison diamonds, and all the lovely, lovely things Sir James has promised me. But, most of all, I want the diamonds—look——" She held up her hand, on which sparkled a heavy ring of diamonds, with one large and magnificent emerald in the centre.

* * * *

Ronald Barton went abroad directly Nella's engagement was announced, and he neither wrote nor came near us before he went.

"I think he might have said good-bye," said Nella angrily.

"You could hardly expect him to," I answered, with some coldness, for Nella's treatment of Ronie was a very sore point. "You could hardly expect him to come and congratulate you on your happiness."

"Why not?" asked Nella, "if he was really fond of me—unselfishly fond—he would want me to be happy."

"I am afraid a man's unselfishness does not take that form," I answered, "and moreover, Nella, there is nothing to congratulate you about, because you're not happy."

"I am," said Nella angrily, "how can you be so horrid, Marjie, you know I'm happy, and Jim has given me a lovely pearl necklace. Look, do look," she added coaxingly, "isn't it a perfect darling?"

"Do say you like them, Marjie dear, do say they're nice."

What a baby she was! I felt half amused and yet half sad and angry as she crossed the room and put the string of white pearls round her equally white and lovely throat, and then, turning to me, said pleadingly:

"Do say you like them, Marjie dear, do say they're nice."

No one could think that Sir James was anything but a most attentive lover, too much so indeed for Nella's taste, for he hardly ever seemed to be away from the house, and he made so great a fuss over her, and took so deep an interest in her trousseau and her engagements, and even the books and papers she read, that Nella began to chafe at the constant attention.

"I never get you to myself," he complained one day, when she invented excuses for not going out with him, "but thank goodness, my darling, I soon shall have you all to myself."

"You'll never have me more than this," answered the wilful Nella. "I can't bear being followed about and fussed over. I like lots and lots of time to myself, and I mean to come and stay here often alone with Marjie." She reported this conversation to me.

"You will have to do what you are told when you are married," I said, but Nella only tossed her head.

"Ronie never ordered me about."

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"Ronald has nothing to do with it," I replied.

"I wish he was rich," sighed Nella.

"He is very well off, and you could have had a nice house and a dog cart, and all sorts of moderate comforts—not that it's any use your talking about that now."

"I don't want moderate comforts," said Nella, "I want diamonds and a motor and nice clothes and—and lots of things. But Marjie—"

"Yes, Nella."

She turned on her way to the door to meet her lover whom she had just been told was waiting in the hall.

"There's one thing I don't want."

"What is that, pet?" I asked.

"Jim," she said, making a little grimace at me as she said it, and a moment later she had left the room and was gaily chatting to Sir James as she told him she was going out.

* * * * *

It was the day before Nella's wedding, and we were in a state of constant excitement, for wedding presents still were pouring in all day, and there were notes to write and parcels to be undone. I felt very unhappy about my pretty, wilful sister. Nella was in a curious state between the most feverishly high spirits and the verge of tears, and if she had not been a thoroughly healthy-minded and practical young woman I should have said she was becoming almost hysterical. To-day, however, she had been in especially high spirits, and I was therefore astonished when she came into my room and, shutting the door, sat down on her usual favourite stool at my side, and, burying her face in my lap, burst into tears.

"Why, Nella pet, what is it?"

"He's come, Marjie—and he—he wants to see me."

"It's only natural," I said, extremely mystified, "and surely you can see him to-day if you can marry him to-morrow."

Nella raised her tear-stained face. "Don't be so silly" she said. "As though I meant Jim!"

"Nella!" I felt my heart sink. She had apparently so completely forgotten Ronald, surely she was not going to begin to amuse herself again at his expense. "When did he return?"

"Three days ago," she said, "and I—I met him yesterday—only by mistake," she added hastily, "and it has made me feel I can't *bear* Jim."

I couldn't bear Sir James myself, for he was not only fussy and extremely boring, but I had noticed several traits in his character I did not like, the chief of which was an intense and over-weening conceit, and a petty inclination to bully those who were dependent on him. He was very unpopular in the village, too, and altogether I thought him a poor substitute for Ronie, with all his money, but most of all I disliked him when Nella repeated a conversation she had had with him that very afternoon.

"He saw me talking to Ronie," she said. "You know, Marjie, the way he always sees everything you don't want him to, and he came up to me afterwards and said: 'Nella, my dearest, I don't wish you to have anything to say to that young cub again—I have never cared for him, and I must beg you to drop him now you are going to be my wife.'"

"What did you say?"

"I said: 'He's worth a million of you,'" replied Nella, "and now he's gone away in a huff, which is a mercy," and she nodded her head defiantly.

"I am not surprised," I said laughing. "But, Nella, you really mustn't speak like that."

Nella pouted.

"Ronie isn't a cub."

"No," I agreed, "he isn't, but the less you think of him the better, especially if you are to drop him as Sir James says."

"Marjie, I am so miserable."

What could I say? There was no use in reminding Nella she ought to have considered Ronie before she became engaged to Sir James. It was too late now—but was it? Is it ever too late?

"Darling," I whispered, and I drew her into my arms. "Don't marry a man you do not love, it's an awful thing to do, remember it's for your whole life long, it's never too late to do the right thing and be true to yourself."

For a moment she clung to me, sobbing and undecided, then she pushed me away and rose to her feet.

"I *shall* marry him," she said angrily, "and I *will* be rich and have everything I want—I will, and I'm a mercenary, miserable wretch, but I don't care, I shall—so there," and she left my room before I could even answer her.

* * * * *

It was a still and lovely autumn morning, and the sun shone brilliantly for Nella's wedding day.

As yet, the leaves had hardly begun to fall, and only the tinted creepers were showing the wane of summer's beauty.

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Masses of bloom still glowed in the garden where the dahlias and double begonias vied with one another in brilliant tones.

Last night, Sir James had come to dinner, but Nella had pleaded a headache and stayed upstairs in her room, and all she would say in answer to the constant messages I took from her anxious lover were "Tell him not to fuss; I won't be fussed."

And now it was her wedding morning, and I must go in and see how she was, and how she had slept, and if she wanted my help.

"Nella"—I opened the door softly. "Nella, are you awake yet, pet?"

There was no answer. I crossed to the window, drew up the blind and turned to the bed. It had not been slept in and the room was empty.

For a moment I felt cold and sick with fear. What had Nella done? She had seemed so miserable and excited lately, and Sir James had worried her so and been so emphatic in his commands to her never to speak to Ronie again—what had she done in a moment of sudden unhappiness I dared not think, and my heart began to beat with fear and dismay when suddenly a note on the table caught my eye, and I tore it open—

DARLING MARJIE,

I am going up to town to marry Ronie To-night I am slipping away and going to Aunt Isabel, as she is sure to be nice, and to-morrow we shall be married quite early—almost as soon as you get this letter, and go abroad. I have written to Jim. He'll be in an awful rage; but he'll soon get over it, as he doesn't really care for anyone but himself. Do forgive me, darling Marjie. I am not so *very* wicked, because I never pretended to care for Jim.

YOUR LOVING NELLA.

P.S.—I don't care a bit about the stupid old diamonds, or the motors, or anything, and I adore Ronie, so it's no use scolding me.

No, I thought, as I laid down the letter, it's no use scolding Nella, and I am ashamed to say I was greatly relieved she was going to marry Ronie after all. Sir James had worried her into becoming engaged, and now he had worried her into jilting him.

Poor Sir James!

I went downstairs to write him a letter, and tell him that Nella, his bride, had married Ronald, and I went with a feeling of relief, and almost exhilaration.

"He's worth a million of you."

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Alec's Lady

The Tale of a Little Boy who Found a Mother.

By E. D. Ross.

Alec Dundonald watched a group of rather dirty but very happy children playing in the gardens.

Presently he went up to one of them.

"Is your name 'Tommy?" he asked.

"Yes, what do you want to know for?"

"I thought you were a Tommy, you look so jolly," answered Alec gravely.

"Get 'long," retorted Tommy, but he seemed pleased all the same.

"Have you a mother?" demanded Alec.

"'Course, 'aven't you?"

"No. I expect that's why you have such fun."

Then Alec saw his severe-looking nurse and her friend coming towards them, and he went to meet her.

He usually took his two daily walks safely held by the hand, but this afternoon nurse had met a friend and Alec had managed to slip away from her for a moment or two. Now, however, she took his hand again. She had been too busy talking to her friend even to notice that the little boy had left her side at all.

Silently they resumed their walk, crossed the road and went into the big house opposite.

Nurse never spoke once except to give orders to the little boy, and she had taught him never to begin a conversation with her. Poor, lonely little Alec, and there was so much he wanted to tell someone.

Nurse gave the child his tea, and then the little fellow crept downstairs on the chance of meeting Amelia.

Amelia was the under housemaid and the only other young thing about the house. Sometimes she managed to get away from her work at this time, and the two would meet in the library and talk.

Sometimes they played, but if they got excited and made too much noise James, the butler, would frown, or nurse would come and take Alec back to the nursery.

This day Alec felt more lonely and depressed than usual. Perhaps it was because he had seen Tommy and his friends having such a good time. He confided all to Amelia.

"Poor little chap"—Amelia's eyes were full of tears as she spoke—"if you only had a mother." And then she wisely talked of other things and cheered Alec back to his usual sunny mood.

They took all care of his health, his clothes, and his person, these prim old Scotchwomen who had charge of little Alec and his home, but only Amelia knew that the child yearned for love and companionship.

That night Alec thought a lot about what Amelia had said, and because he knew nothing about such things he decided he must find a mother himself. He would look out for a very nice lady and ask her if she would be his mother.

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So every day the little boy looked at all the ladies he saw, until one day he passed one whom he liked better than all the others. She was young and she was laughing with a friend.

She was happy, at any rate, thought Alec, and he smiled in sympathy.

He saw her the next day too. This time she was alone, and was not laughing when Alec first saw her. But she noticed his intent gaze and smiled at him. She even turned round after she had passed, and, seeing the child smile, she waved her hand to him.

Several times they met, until they were old acquaintances.

Then one joyous day nurse met a friend and forgot Alec. He made the most of his chance and ran to the place where he usually met his lady friend.

There she was coming along with an older lady.

Alec waited for her, and she stopped.

"Good morning, my little admirer," said the lady laughing as she shook his hand, "where is your grim guardian this morning?"

Alec didn't quite know what she meant, but he risked his answer.

"Nurse met a friend, and so I could get away to meet you."

"My dear child. Let us all sit down on this seat, and you can tell us who you are."

They all three sat down, Alec next to his lady.

"What is your name?"

"Alec."

"Alec what?"

"I don't know any more."

"What do other people call you besides Alec?" persisted the lady.

"Master Alec, that's all."

"How pathetic!" ejaculated the other lady.

Again Alec didn't understand the words, but he explained:

"Nurse calls me Alec, and Amelia does too when no one is there. The others all call me Master Alec. It isn't pretty, and when I find a mother I shall ask her to call me Tommy, because Tommies always have such fun."

"Are you looking for a mother?" asked Alec's lady surprised.

"Have you a mother?" demanded Alec.

"Yes. When you have a mother you have fun and are happy," said Alec gravely. "Amelia says so, and she must know because she is a great deal older than I am."

"Have you a father?"

"Oh, yes; but when he's at home he's too busy to bother about me."

"The darling!" exclaimed Alec's lady, suddenly hugging him. "I'll be your adopted mother, Alec, and we'll have such fun."

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"How lovely!" cried the child. "I meant to ask you when I knew you better."

The two ladies laughed for a long time after that, and Alec laughed too.

Presently the elder lady asked him where he lived. Alec pointed to a house which they could just see peeping through the trees.

"Why," said the elder lady, "he must be Sir Hugh Dundonald's boy."

"Goodness gracious!" said Alec's lady, whose name was Alice Charrington. She looked at the little boy intently. "Is he your father? I know him, Alec."

"Do you like him?" asked the child.

Again the ladies laughed, but there was a little catch in Alice's voice as she said:

"I don't know, darling. . . I don't know."

The elder lady, Lady Anson, laughed, because she knew that Sir Hugh had found time to admire Alice Charrington.

A few days later, Alec's father came back to London. He came home unexpectedly, and was greatly surprised to hear voices in the library. He opened the door quietly, and saw Alec and Miss Charrington firing with a wire gun at a target fastened to the window curtain, while Lady Anson was umpire.

"It's Sir Hugh," cried Lady Anson. "Alec has a cold this afternoon, so we've come to play with him," she explained.

"Lucky boy," and Sir Hugh patted his son's head, after greeting Miss Charrington. Then he took his turn, and made all bull's-eyes.

They all had tea together, and then Alec found himself showing Lady Anson some of his treasures upstairs, and telling her how much he had enjoyed himself because:

"I've never played a game with father before."

"Well, dear, I expect you'll play many games with him now."

Alec was so glad, though he couldn't understand how she could possibly know.

But downstairs Alice Charrington was remembering her promise to Alec, and when Sir Hugh said:

"Alice, won't you change your mind and be my wife?"

Alice looked up into his pleading face and answered:

"I've promised Alec to be his mother, and so I expect I must."

And so Alec found a mother.

Alec and Miss Charrington firing with a wire gun at a target fastened to the window curtains.

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Strange Tasks of Modern Mercuries

The London District Messenger Boy and His Duties.

By W. B. Northrop.

For escorting young visitors through the London streets, the messenger boy is invaluable.

"When in doubt, ring for a messenger boy," is the advice of a well-known actor-manager. It is a good rule; for there is scarcely an emergency to which the modern Mercury is unequal. In fact, the capabilities of the call-box are well-nigh inexhaustible. Veritably, it holds, in modern times, a position similar to that commanded by Aladdin's lamp of old. Only, instead of rubbing a lamp, and ordering an unwieldy and somewhat terrifying Genie about, you pull a lever, and a harmless messenger boy presents himself, willing to go anywhere or do anything that may reasonably be required.

Even in the fearsome field of domestic employment, messengers step in where mistresses fear to tread. Already the function of the nursemaid has been usurped by the boy in blue; and it looks as if we were coming within a measurable distance of the beatific time when even the cook might be defied with impunity. Doubtless, before many years, should coachman, cook, housemaid, nurse, or other domestic servant "give notice," the alarming situation might be met with complacency by merely "ringing up" for the particular kind of help needed.

Indeed, it is not an unusual sight to-day to see little children escorted to the nearest kindergarten by smartly-dressed messengers. As "baby minders" the popularity of the District Service is growing daily. Lady subscribers very often require messenger boys to take babies out for walks. Pushing perambulators in the park is not a task for which members of the messenger force compete very vigorously with each other; but, as the custom seems to be growing, doubtless before very long there will be organised a regular baby-minding corps. These boys will be trained how to face all the infinite little predicaments that arise in the daily life of King Baby, from keeping the sun out of His Majesty's eyes to—well, other things.

As a matter of fact, there is scarcely a field of domestic or professional work in which District messengers may not be found useful in one way or another. Indeed, the range of their employment is almost as astonishing as is the peculiar character of some of the tasks to which they are assigned.

The keynote of messenger duty is diversity. There is a fascinating uncertainty about the work that must be one of its strongest attractions to those engaged in the service. When a "call" is rung up for a boy at one of the numerous stations scattered about London, the lad who answers it does not know whether he will be required to take an old maid's basket of kittens out for an airing, or carry a tube of dangerous explosive from one Government laboratory to another.

Not long ago a very cantankerous old gentleman sent for a District messenger for the purpose of "changing poultices." It seems that this gentleman had been taken ill, and, being a woman-hater, refused to admit a trained nurse to his presence. As a male attendant was not at the moment available, the doctor hit upon the happy expedient of calling in a District boy, who performed his duties admirably.

In fact, the enumeration of the peculiar—often bizarre—tasks to which London messengers are set reads more like romantic fable than sober truth. It was more or less the fashion a few years ago to ring up a messenger, and, in a nonchalant way, send

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him to the ends of the earth on a trivial quest. This somewhat expensive amusement was indulged in with an air of careless indifference which conveyed a very effective impression.

One of the most notable instances of this kind was the trip made by Jaggers at the instance of Mr. Richard Harding Davis. Mr. Davis had made a wager with Mr. H. Somers Somerset, son of Lady Henry Somerset, that he could call up an ordinary messenger boy who would go from London to Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia, and deliver letters properly, without written instructions, returning to London by a certain date.

The call was "rung in," the boy Jaggers responded, took the letters, and started out on his journey without further preliminaries. The lad performed his task with marvelous celerity, and on his return to London became the hero of the hour. He was even presented to the late Queen Victoria, who praised him for his long and plucky journey.

A nurse who never gossips or neglects the baby.

Another extremely interesting adventure was that undertaken by Messenger C. J. Hill, who was required to deliver a collie dog, valued at £2000, to the Sultan of Turkey. The animal was a present from Sir Vincent Caillard, of the National Bank of Egypt. When young Hill reached Constantinople with his dumb charge he created quite a sensation, the members of the Sultan's Court taking the greatest interest in him. On being presented to His Majesty, he was asked if he would not like to remain in Constantinople, and a place in the Palace was offered him. Though the pay was on a princely scale, and the duties were comparatively light, the messenger declined the flattering offer, preferring the sober seriousness of dingy London to the golden glamour of the Eastern capital. On his return home, the Foreign Office notified Master Hill that a Court honour had been conferred upon him in the shape of a decoration, which was duly forwarded to him, and which he wears to-day on State occasions.

The sending of boys on long-distance journeys is now almost a matter of everyday occurrence. Recently a lad was sent to Madrid to collect luggage left behind by an English traveler who had vacated the Spanish capital in a great hurry. Boys think nothing of a "run over to New York and back." American visitors often send them over to bring back forgotten articles, or to convey personal messages to friends at home.

One of the most interesting American trips ever taken was that performed for the late Col. M'Calmont. The Colonel one day rang up a messenger, and handed him a note "for immediate delivery." On looking at the address, it was ascertained that the point of delivery was Hansard, California, U.S.A. In less than two hours after receiving the commission, the messenger was *en route* to Liverpool, whence he caught the first boat to New York. Arriving at New York, he lost no time in booking to California, at that time a seven-day trip by rail across the vast American continent. The note was safely delivered several hours before the arrival of the regular mails; and, as this was Colonel M'Calmont's object in sending the note by this means, the trip proved a decided success. It is said that the fees in this case amounted to considerably over a hundred pounds, to say nothing of the special present made to

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Messenger C. J. Hill taking the £2000 collie to the Sultan of Turkey.

the District messenger boy on his return to London.

District messengers are often sent to Paris to pay bills, and even to redeem pledges pawned in the French metropolis. These missions are generally of a very delicate nature, requiring great judgment, tact, and, of course, absolute secrecy. Only those who have been long in the service and who know French well are sent on such quests.

One of the strangest trips ever taken to France was by a District courier sent to the Pasteur Institute to bring back a tube of deadly microbes, required by an English scientist. On another occasion a messenger was dispatched to Paris for some liquid air.

These messengers are very popular among scientific investigators, and even the Government occasionally employs them to carry various objects. Not long ago, a boy was required to go from one laboratory to another with a parcel of cordite—one of the most powerful explosives known to man. As cordite is not dangerous unless handled in a certain way, the life of the messenger was not in jeopardy. However, persons who knew what he carried on this occasion were careful to give him a wide berth, and it is safe to say he was not subjected to any rude "shocks" by his playful companions.

Lecturers on medicine frequently require the attendance of messengers for the purpose of converting them into "models" at physical demonstrations. A not very agreeable task imposed on one of the boys last year was the watching of a corpse. When duties such as this are required, it is the rule of the inspector to call for "volunteers"; but it is seldom boys are daunted by any such demands.

District boys are in great favour among the blind. They are regularly employed in large numbers to take blind persons from place to place. It is said that they are most successful in all situations requiring tact and sympathy. Some blind people have become so attached to their messenger guides that they employ no other attendant. The boys are employed also to wait upon other persons suffering from various afflictions. They are useful in such employments as wheeling the paralytic about in bath chairs, reading to sick people, and

Liquid air and cordite are safely conveyed to any address by messenger boys.

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doing other kindly offices which verge on the duties of the nurse. Many boys are very entertaining conversationalists, and several of them are quite successful in dealing with patients who prove unreasonable and refractory.

A boy was recently required to conduct a lunatic from London to a point some distance in the country. The journey was performed at night. Naturally, few were anxious to undertake a task requiring that they should be locked in a railway compartment at night alone with a lunatic. The manager of the District Company, who asked for volunteers for this work, was surprised to find, however, that several were quite willing to perform this unpleasant duty.

But it is not "all work and no play" which falls to the lot of the London messenger. There are some so-called tasks which any of them would be highly delighted to fulfil. Last Christmas, two boys were employed to show the "sights" of London to a couple of Indian Princes, and to aid them in their selection of presents to send home. It is scarcely necessary to say that the guides had a splendid time, from start to finish. The days were spent in sight-seeing and going to shows of various kinds: every night there was a theatre, or a big dinner, and for a week these two youths lived in an earthly paradise. It was very hard on them when they had to return to the ordinary duties of life, after having, practically, been elevated into the rarer atmosphere of Royalty for more than a week.

A trustworthy guide for the blind.

London messenger boys are not employed by Indian Royalty only, however. They are much in favour in several of the titled families of England. Buckingham Palace and Marlborough House frequently send for them, while at the home of the Duke of Connaught —Bagshot Park—they may be said to be quite a part of the ordinary domestic arrangements. At Clarence House, too, His Royal Highness employs several messengers on the tennis courts to pick up balls. They are also engaged as caddies on a number of ducal golf courses.

A very unique service connected with the Messenger Boy Brigade is "reminding." This consists in calling some people to keep appointments, arousing others at stated times in the mornings, in order that they will be in time for work, keeping some posted with reference to events in which they are interested; and generally acting as a species of secondary memory, relieving the mind of many petty and vexatious, yet, in themselves, important particulars. During the last solar eclipse boys were employed to remind persons of the hour; and, when the last show of meteors was predicted, many boys were engaged to arouse scientific observers from their slumbers in order to observe the phenomena.

If you are interested in some coming event, and fear that, through some inadvertence, you might fail to think of it in time, you can employ a messenger to remind you, and you may depend upon it that your interest in the event will not be allowed to flag.

To the naturally forgetful, messengers have at times rendered yeoman service. A traveler to America *vid* Liverpool recently forgot his ear-trumpet. As the instrument was absolutely necessary to him, he wired to London to have it sent to Queenstown, the first point of call of the boat the next morning. A messenger boy dispatched from London with the ear-trumpet arrived at Queenstown in ample time to go on board, to the infinite relief of the passenger, who hailed the boy from the tender with great enthusiasm as soon as he saw him.

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On another occasion a traveler from Marseilles to India forgot some luggage at the French port. A boy was dispatched from London, and he succeeded, on reaching Marseilles, in having the baggage forwarded in such a way that it was placed on the Indian boat before it had reached the Suez Canal. There are hundreds of cases recorded where forgetful travelers have been wonderfully assisted by calling in the aid of District messengers at the last moment.

It was out of an incident of this kind that the saying arose: "When in doubt—send for a messenger boy." The story goes that a well-known London actor, traveling in the provinces, on one occasion forgot an important piece of "stage property." He was almost at his wits' end over the matter when, looking out of the window of his hotel, he chanced to see a messenger boy crossing the street. The idea occurred to him to telegraph to London to have a messenger boy look after the missing article. This was done with great success, and the situation saved.

Taking a couple of pet dogs for an airing in a public square.

There are often exciting incidents in the careers of messenger boys. Not infrequently their services have been useful in connection with the trapping of criminals. Now and then call-boxes are used as burglar alarms. A notable case of this kind occurred in St. John's Wood a few years ago, at the residence of Mr. Cohen. Finding that his house had been broken into, Mr. Cohen rang up the District Messenger Station at Swiss Cottage, and conveyed the intelligence that a burglar was on his premises. Of course this was done without the knowledge of the trespasser. Two messenger boys went immediately and brought policemen to the spot, just in time to capture a man leaving the house with his booty.

Some of the tasks imposed on messengers are ludicrous. For instance, one boy was required to lead a live donkey from Charing Cross to Euston. He left the station amid the applause and bantering chaff of the railway porters. As he proceeded to his destination, his progress became a species of triumphal march, most of the street gamins of that section of London manifesting the liveliest interest in the boy and his somewhat frisky charge.

Another boy was called up to take a basketful of kittens out for an airing. Taking pet dogs to walk in the parks is one of the most usual occupations of messengers; while they are often employed to look after other pets as well, such as small birds, parrots, and monkeys.

One of the most amusing experiences ever had by a messenger boy was to conduct a Chinese servant belonging to the family of a

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wealthy peer from London to a place on the Continent.

The Celestial from the Flowery Kingdom arrived in England direct from the East too late to meet his master, who had gone abroad, and the Chinaman was turned over to the tender mercies of a messenger boy. Of course, the stranger could not speak a word of English, nor did the boy know any Chinese; while neither of them knew a word of French. The journey was performed by means of signs, the "inexplicable dumb-show" affording an immense fund of amusement to the fellow-passengers of the strange pair. However, despite all his difficulties, the messenger delivered John Chinaman safely, and the efforts of the knight of the call-box were duly rewarded.

There are times, however, when the employments offered these boys are far from amusing or pleasant. Bank robbers and cheque forgers have occasionally utilised them as part of their "system." The usual thing is to call a boy to some first-class hotel—where a room has been engaged as part of the plant—and send him to the bank with a forged cheque. The boy, innocently enough, presents the cheque, and very often obtains the money before it is discovered that the document is a forgery. By this means the impostor himself is not seen in the bank, and cannot be identified subsequently, except, of course, by the messenger boy. In some of these cases, however, messengers have rendered invaluable aid to the police by helping to catch persons who have used them dishonestly.

Another form of employment which is to be deprecated is sending boys to various points for the express purpose of dispatching telegrams conveying the impression that the principal is absent on business.

This kind of work is, it is scarcely necessary to say, not encouraged by the company. As the boys when called out, however, are at the service of whoever employs them, they are not supposed to be more than mechanical instruments of their employers, who are responsible to the company for their time. If they are required to go down into the country to send a telegraph message back to London, that is part of their "day's work," and the boys themselves are not supposed to ask questions.

One of the most important duties of messenger boys is acting as guides to London visitors. Many of the newly-elected Members of Parliament have employed them in this capacity, and found them extremely efficient. Several of the boys are endowed with

Messenger boys keeping places in a theatre queue for those who do not care to wait themselves.

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exceptionally accurate information of a unique character concerning points of interest in London; and nearly all know the streets of the Metropolis "like a book." Indeed, it is part of the training of the messenger boy to know his streets quite as well as does the policeman or cab-driver,

As escorts for young boys, or for ladies visiting London for the first time, messenger boys have proved invaluable. The District Company often receives a commission from an anxious parent to conduct some tender youth about the city in such a manner that instruction may be combined with amusement of the proper kind. Most of these boys seem to possess exceptionally sound ideas of their responsibilities in life. They are, as a rule, selected for service only after the most rigid inquiry into character, and it is doubtful if one would be able to find anywhere so numerous a body —they number nearly 1000—with so clean a record for upright service. As guides for young boys, children, and young ladies, they have never been known to render anything but exceptional service.

Messenger boys have proved most useful in giving the alarm in cases of fire.

One of the most popular forms of messenger employment is in the theatre "queue." At the famous Terry benefit recently, no fewer than ninety-nine boys were engaged to hold places during the record wait of thirty hours. At nearly every performance of popular plays in London one may see lads holding places in line for those who are not willing to "stand and wait."

In certain offices in the City messenger boys are engaged to operate lifts, and do other responsible tasks usually assigned to well-trained officials. At times offices will need extra help in a clerical line, and not infrequently messengers are called in for this work.

Meeting a young lady visitor at the railway station.

All the call boxes connected with the various central and sub-stations on the District service have a special indicating lever to be pulled in case of "fire." The very prompt action of messenger boys in notifying the nearest fire-station, or even smashing the glass fronts of the street alarms, has often prevented serious conflagrations.

The bare description of the entire list of duties engaged in by London's messenger corps would make quite a substantial document. It has been possible here only to give a brief outline of some unique undertakings.

Here is a short table, however, of some of the employments in which they are most frequently engaged:

Baby-minders and nurse-maids.	Shopping commissioners.
Attendants for new M.P.'s	Burglar catchers.
Government couriers.	Caddies for golfers.
Messengers to Royalty.	Cricket and tennis attendants.
Trained nurses.	Models for artists.
Globe trotters on one-minute's notice.	Theatre attendants.
Attendants for valuable pets.	Guides of all kinds.
Reminders for the absent-minded.	Secret service work.
Attendants on the blind.	Lunatic minders.
Guards for the dead.	Lift operators.
Public carriers.	Rapid travelers.
Boot-blacks.	Special clerks.
	Waiters.
	Grooms.
	Actors.

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Late Roses.

A Story of Love and Gloires de Dijon.

By Ruby M. Ayres.

Miss Dorothy Bird peeped between the spotless curtains of her sitting-room window with an excited flush on her thin face.

It was the end of the summer, and the fragrant *Gloire de Dijon* roses so carefully trained around her window were beginning to look a little faded and tired like their owner, but, like their owner also, they still possessed some of the lingering beauty of youth.

Miss Bird had looked at them every morning lately with dissatisfied eyes, on account of their slightly bedraggled appearance, but she had not yet had the heart to cut them down and so banish the last trace of summer. This morning, however, she had no eyes for anything but the big two-horse pantechnicon which had arrived at daybreak outside the gloomy house over the way, from the capacious depths of which men in green aprons were carrying massive furniture and carefully-shrouded pictures.

The house had been empty for years, but nobody knew to whom it belonged, and there had never been a board up to attract the eyes of passers-by to its sombre magnificence.

Many and varied were the stories that little Miss Bird had woven round its frowning gables and cold stone walls from her small front window, which was No. 24 of a row of stuccoed villas which some enterprising, but highly inartistic, builder had dared to put up right under the disdainful nose of the great Grey House—but she forgot them everyone this morning in the keen excitement of the moment.

Someone had taken the house at last!

Perhaps in a few hours she would see smiling faces at its great, wide windows instead of the pale ghosts with which she had furnished it in her dreams, and hear the laughter of little children under the shade of its great oak trees, instead of the sad sighing of the wind, which had always seemed like the mournful wailing of unhappy spirits.

All down the row of stuccoed villas there were curious eyes peeping from behind curtains of various colours and designs, but Miss Bird alone had the felicity of looking straight on to the scene, for her house was as exactly opposite to the lofty porch of the Grey House as anything could well be.

There was a fat charwoman with bare, red arms who now and then came to the door and exchanged laughing remarks with the men, or rated them soundly for the

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clumsy way in which they handled some of the furniture, and her loud voice and good-natured laugh rang clearly across the road to Miss Bird's eager ears.

By twelve o'clock the last of the many pictures had been disposed of.

The men put on their coats, took off their horses' nosebags, and presently the great pantechnicon lumbered heavily away down the road, leaving no trace of its unwonted presence save a litter of straw on the weed-grown drive, and two deep ruts in the muddy road outside.

Miss Bird moved away from the window with a little sigh.

The small clock on the shelf pointed to half-past twelve!

For three hours, then, she had stood at the window, and it had seemed but a few moments.

In sudden panic she flew to the kitchen, where the small maid was wondering what on earth had happened to prevent Miss Bird from carrying out the daily routine which for ten years had never altered one iota, save in the case of illness. There was mild disapproval in her eyes as Miss Bird tied her apron about her thin waist with unsteady fingers, and whisked away to dust the treasures in the front room that no hands but her own were allowed to touch.

Her thoughts were far away this morning, as she carefully lifted, and dusted, and replaced one by one the faded photographs and small nicknacks of her girlhood.

There was some story attached to each of them, but she barely remembered their histories this morning, so full of the new excitement was she.

Even when she came to the one silver frame on the mantelshelf which held the photograph of the only creature Miss Bird had ever loved, she forgot to sigh as her dreamy eyes fell on his grave young face. She dusted and polished it carefully, more from force of habit than anything else; but alas! just as she was about to replace it on its corner, the gate of the Grey House clanged violently.

Miss Bird started—the frame slipped from her fingers and fell crashing into the fender.

With a cry of distress, she dropped on her knees and tenderly picked it up from the pieces of shattered glass.

There seemed to be deep reproach in the pictured eyes, and Miss Bird clasped it to her breast with a little sob.

"Oh, how *could* I have been so careless," she said aloud. "And after all," with a shamed glance over her shoulder out of the window, "it was nothing but the milkman. I wonder, by the way, which milkman they are going to have."

She tripped to the window, still clasping her broken treasure, and gave a gurgle of delight as she read on the yellow-painted sides of the cart the name of her own dairyman.

"I think I will go down and buy some fresh butter from him this afternoon," she thought.

Then she kissed the photograph, and dropped a tear on its faded surface.

"He'll know I didn't mean it," she thought with a sense of comfort. "He always understood me."

Then she put it carefully away, and went upstairs.

But the milkman, in spite of the pound of fresh butter, had nothing to add to what Miss Bird's eyes had already told her, and she walked slowly home with a sense of disappointment.

There was nothing for it but to wait, and wait Miss Bird did for three whole weeks before any further signs of life appeared in the house over the way.

The charwoman daily let herself in at the back door and opened the windows, and returned in the evening to shut them, but she stolidly resisted any temptation to gossip, and even the milkman could glean nothing from her.

It was one wet October afternoon, when Miss Bird's tidy soul could no longer stand the sight of the bedraggled roses, that she donned a mackintosh and a pair of goloshes, and, mounted on a low pair of steps outside the window, bade farewell to her treasures.

Every autumn, when it became necessary to cut off the last of the drooping, sweet-scented heads, Miss Bird experienced the same heartache, for in the dead past, when she had been young and pretty, someone (the original of the faded photograph) had been inseparably wrapped up in her heart with their perfume.

How well she remembered that morning when he bade her good-bye in the little German town!

He would soon be back, he said, and, reaching up his strong arms above her head, he had plucked one glorious yellow rose, and given it to her.

"I will soon be back," he said, kissing her tearful face, "and then we shall never part again."

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But he had never come!

He had written twice, dear, true-sounding letters, which she could never, even after all the years that had passed, believe to be anything but sincere; but he had never come back, and the letters had ceased as suddenly as if the grave had cut him from her.

Sometimes she thought that he must be dead, though everyone said it was but the old story over again, of the man who loves and rides away.

And Miss Bird had gone on living in the German pastor's family, and had faithfully tried to drive English into the heads of his offspring for three bitter years after the close of her love-dream, and every morning she woke and told herself "He will come to-day"; and every Englishman she met in the little town she thought was Dennis Clifford. But the bravest heart has to give up in the end, and so, when the news of her small legacy came, she vanished from the little German town where she had known the only happiness of her life, and settled down in No. 24 of the stuccoed villas in the land of her birth.

That was eighteen years ago!

Miss Bird was nearly forty now, but the scent of the dead "Glories" still had the power to bring the tears to her eyes, as with tender hands she cut them down and laid them in her basket.

"He is dead," she said half aloud, as she had said every October since that golden day when Dennis Clifford had kissed her good-bye.

"He *could* not come back."

The rain fell gently on to her uncovered head, and mingled with the sad tears from her eyes.

Not once had she thought bitterly of the man whose image had never for a moment been effaced or dimmed in her heart through all the long years.

She laid the last blossom carefully in her basket, and climbed slowly down the steps.

A closed fly lumbering heavily up the road stopped at the gates of the Grey House.

A flush of excitement dried the tears on Miss Bird's cheeks.

She paused on the bottom step, regardless of the fact that her skirt was gathered tightly around her, and that quite two inches of an ankle that was still slim and pretty were visible to the passer-by, and turned eager eyes on the shabby vehicle.

The driver was looking across at her.

"Would it be troublin' you, ma'am," he said, touching his hat. "I can't leave the 'orse to get down, and the gen'leman's ill——"

Miss Bird was off the steps and across the road in the twinkling of an eye.

With the basket of dead roses still on her arm, she struggled with the rusty latch of the heavy gate, and succeeded in dragging it open.

"'Ere you are, sir," said the driver, turning his head towards the carriage-door.

It was opened slowly from within, and with difficulty a man wrapped in a fur-lined coat descended.

Miss Bird cast shy, curious glances at him.

A tall man, grey-headed, with the tired look and unsteady walk of one recovering from an illness——

Little Miss Bird gave a great sob, and dropped the basket of dead roses at her feet in the rain, for the man was Dennis Clifford!

No doubt of the fact entered her mind, no thought of this being a mistaken likeness—though eighteen years had changed him from a bright-faced youth to this bowed, sad man. Her heart knew him at once.

And he——? At the sound of that sob he turned his face, and his eyes passed over her with the unrecognising look of a stranger.

Miss Bird heard him sigh—the deep sigh of weariness. Then a man-servant, who had run out of the Grey House at sound of the carriage wheels, came to the support of his weak steps, and the two passed through the gates held open by Miss Bird's trembling hands.

* * * * *

It was dusk before Miss Bird rose from the bed where she had thrown herself down when, trembling and sobbing, she had run back across the road after Dennis Clifford's eyes had looked blankly at her. That careless, indifferent glance had hurt her more than all the years of his silence.

Had he so completely forgotten that even the sight of her face had no power to open the gates of memory?—or was it that she had so altered?

She rose from the bed with tottering steps, and hastily lighting a candle peered at herself in the small, round looking-glass.

Such swollen eyes! Such quivering lips!

But underneath all the tears and sorrow, the ghost of the girlish beauty Dennis Clifford had loved and kissed looked back at her from the faded blue eyes.

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"If he had ever cared—he would have known me—" she told herself.

"*He* has altered, but I knew *him*—"

She blew out the candle, and crept back to the bed sobbing.

She forgot that she was nearly forty, and an old maid, and remembered only that her lover was across the road—that she had seen him, that he had looked at her; and that he had not known her!

* * *

As he passed through the gate on the arm of his man-servant, Dennis Clifford paused and looked round.

"Roses, Bailie," he said. "Roses in October—where are they?"

"Dead ones, lying on the path, sir," said Bailie. "I noticed the scent myself."

"The 'Glories' always were sweet," said Dennis Clifford. "I remember——" He broke off.

"Let us get indoors, Bailie," he said wearily, "it's cold and dreary."

* * *

It would have been difficult to say, after that morning, how much of her time Miss Bird spent at the window.

She was a sensible little woman, and after the first heartbreak she had allowed herself no more grieving.

She bought new curtains for the entire front of the house, though there was nothing whatever wrong with the others, and she bought herself two new winter dresses instead of one; and settled down to spend most of her time at the window.

The parlour, which hitherto was never opened except on Sundays, came into every-day use.

"It is so much more cheerful," she explained guiltily to the little maid. "And I do love cheerfulness."

So she wheeled the arm-chair to the window, and her work-table beside it, and spent the dull November afternoons there.

She had not seen Dennis Clifford again, but that he had been ill she knew, for the doctor stopped there on most days, and Miss Bird, on more than one occasion, had hard work to keep herself from running out to question him as to the nature of the illness.

It happened one afternoon that she was coming in

Little Miss Bird gave a great sob, and dropped the basket of dead roses.

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from her week's shopping when the doctor came out of the Grey House.

He saw Miss Bird, and came across the road. He had attended her twice for bronchitis, and in his rugged way he had conceived a great tenderness for the lonely little woman.

"It's too foggy for you to be out," he said briskly as they shook hands. "Bronchitis subjects should sit by the fire in November."

Miss Bird laughed. There was a little, excited flush in her thin cheeks, and not for the first time it occurred to the doctor that she must have been a very pretty girl.

He took the flush to himself, but Miss Bird saw nothing in his stalwart form but someone to be envied forasmuch as he had been within the grey walls of the house opposite, and seen the man for a sight of whom she went hungry all the days and nights.

"You have a patient opposite?" she said.

"Yes—poor fellow. There's nothing much amiss with him but loneliness. Why don't you call on him, Miss Bird?" whimsically.

Miss Bird raised deprecatory hands.

"Well, it would be a kindness in this place of Levites," said the doctor bluntly, "for someone to act the good Samaritan."

Miss Bird's lip trembled.

"Is he so *very* lonely, then?" she asked.

The doctor shrugged his broad shoulders.

"The house is little better than a tomb," he said. "What would you expect a man to be if not lonely? He has been here seven weeks, and has not spoken to a soul but his man, Bailie, and myself. Poor fellow!"

The tears swam suddenly to Miss Bird's eyes.

"There is nothing worse than loneliness," she said pathetically.

She lifted her mournful eyes to the doctor's face as she thought of the years gone by when *she* had sat in loneliness, longing for the sound of that one voice.

Oh, if only *his* sadness were for her!

She became conscious that the doctor's eyes were watching her oddly.

He turned suddenly, and went back to his trap.

"Well, good-bye," he said cheerily. "If you *can* screw up your courage to act the Good Samaritan——"

Miss Bird shook her head, and he drove off.

That evening, when the blinds were drawn down in the big house over the way, Miss Bird put on her hat and stole guiltily out and into the town. It was market-night, and she made her way to a big flower-stall, where, only that morning, she had seen a basket of yellow roses.

The price was far, far more than she could afford, but she never hesitated, and presently came away with the basket of "Glories" hugged closely in her arms.

When she reached the row of stuccoed villas, she crossed over the road, and for the second time pushed open the heavy gate.

Up the weed-grown path she stole, looking fearfully around her as if dreading someone would see her, and set the basket of roses gently down on the step in the shadow of the great door.

Then she gave the rusty bell a nervous tug. Far, far away in the distant passages she heard it clang hollowly. Then she gathered up her skirts and fled panting down the drive.

The next morning, when the doctor came away from the Grey House, instead of getting at once into his trap, he crossed the road, and went up the spotless steps of No. 24.

Miss Bird's heart fluttered into her mouth as from behind her curtains she saw his broad shoulders filling up her little doorway.

When he came into the room she was pale and breathless. He stood looking down at her with a smile.

She forced herself to speak.

"How is the patient? Better, I hope."

The doctor shook his head.

"The Good Samaritan in the parable did not think of roses," he said.

Miss Bird trembled so that she had to sit down.

"You did not tell him?" she gasped.

"You did not tell *me!*" said the doctor gravely. "Miss Bird, why did you not say that you knew him?"

Miss Bird began to cry softly.

"Then he knew—he knew?" she sobbed. "Oh, I am so ashamed."

The big man came forward and laid a kind hand on her shoulder.

"Tell me all about it," he said gently, as if he were speaking to a troubled child; and Miss Bird sobbed out the whole pitiful story, beginning from the far away days in the little German town, and ending with her own panic-stricken flight down the drive of the Grey House on the previous evening.

"I should never have done it, only you—you said he was ill and—and lonely—and now I am ashamed, for he looked at me as if I had been a stranger."

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The doctor's eyes rested on the small, bowed head with a tender incredulity.

"Has it never occurred to you?" he said, "that there was some great reason for his leaving you—something else than mere faithlessness?"

Miss Bird gave no answer but a sob.

"He has never forgotten you," went on the doctor gravely.

"Your roses last night—he will tell you better than I; but is it possible that you have never heard—that you did not know—that—he is—*blind?*"

* * * * *

The patience of the occupants of the stuccoed villas on either side of No. 24 had been sorely tried by Dr. Thorn's long visit to Miss Bird.

The curtains had twitched aside many times to give place to inquisitive faces and necks craned in order to see what was going on behind the snowy curtains in the front parlour.

No. 22 had always *known* that Miss Bird had designs on the doctor, though she had, of course, been too charitable to say so up to the present, but when it came to a feigned illness in order to get him into the house—well, it was time somebody spoke their mind!

No. 26 expressed very much the same sentiments, and added that, as she had seen Miss Bird buying roses in the market-place late on the evening before, it was only too obvious what her little game was; but, thank Heaven! the doctor was such a dear, sensible man, he would of course see through it all!

What would have been said if Nos. 22 and 26 could have seen into that front parlour would probably have filled a book; for the "dear, sensible man" was holding Miss Bird's hand in both his big ones, and looking anything but professional.

"It was mistaken honour, I admit," he was saying earnestly. "But such a mistake can always be forgiven—and his own punishment has been greater than yours. Imagine what it must have cost him all these years to know you were thinking of him as faithless!"

"He could not have loved me much to imagine I should leave him because he had lost his sight," said Miss Bird firmly.

She was sitting upright now, without a trace of tears in her eyes, and her gentle lips were set in a thin line.

"I have never blamed him all these years," she said in a hard voice. "No, I am sure I have never in my heart blamed him; but I do now! It hurts my pride that he should have thought so little of my faith. I am sorry, but I quite forbid you to tell him where I live."

His fingers found what they sought, and he carefully extracted one from the basket.

Dr. Thorn walked over to the window, and stood looking out into the street at his waiting trap.

There was silence in the little room.

Miss Bird's eyes were fixed on the faded photograph in the silver frame.

The doctor suddenly turned round:

"I wanted you to give in from the right motive," he said, "but you will not. I tell you—you *must*, unless you would have the man's death at your door! The shock last night of guessing you were somewhere near

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—the suspense when I would not tell him—come, Miss Bird."

He had touched the right chord. Miss Bird's eyes suddenly rained tears.

She held her trembling hands to the doctor.

"Oh, I will come, I will come," she said.

* * * * *

The agitation of the window curtains on either side of No. 24 was something wonderful to behold as the doctor strode down the steps with little Miss Bird shrinking behind him; but, when he dismissed his trap, and with an air of protection drew Miss Bird's arm in his own stalwart one, and led her across the road to the gate of the Grey House, the eyes of Nos. 22 and 26 fairly bolted from their sockets.

A discreet Bailie with drooped eyes opened the door in answer to the doctor's imperious knock.

Miss Bird felt that he had been waiting for it, and her knees trembled so that she would have fallen but for the strong arm on which she leant.

Down the dark hall she walked as one in a dream; but when they stopped at a door, and Dr. Thorn gently disengaged himself, she shrank back.

"I can't, I can't," she said fearfully.

Dr. Thorn's answer was to open the door and gently push her forward, shutting it tightly behind her.

For a moment all swam before Miss Bird's eyes, then the darkness slowly cleared away, and she saw Dennis Clifford sitting by the fire in the dusk.

The sight of his grey head and pale, thin face suddenly calmed her, and she went forward and stood near him.

"Dennis," she said.

She saw him rise slowly from his chair and turn his fine head in her direction.

Oh, could it be that those handsome eyes were indeed sightless?

Little Miss Bird stood with one hand pressed against her heart, her head stretched forward gazing at him.

"Why did you leave me, Dennis?" she asked.

And the infinite sadness of the man's voice nearly broke her heart as he answered:

"I am blind."

"I loved you," said Miss Bird.

It seemed as if the past eighteen years were swept away in a flash, and she was back again in the quaint German town.

The air was filled with the scent of the roses—she and Dennis were young again.

"Oh, you should have trusted me," she said, with a wail of sorrow for their lost youth. "I would never have failed you."

"Is it too late now?" he asked pitifully. "I am a rich man, Dorothy—I would try not to make it hard for you——"

"We have lost the roses, Dennis," said Miss Bird; but in the firelight she crept closer to him.

The man's face lit up.

"There are always roses where you are," he said.

He moved his hand gropingly in the direction of the little table where the basket of "Glories" stood.

It was sad, so infinitely sad, to see the strong man so helpless! His fingers found what they sought, and he carefully extracted one from the basket.

He held it to Miss Bird across the firelit space.

Her hand went out to it, then fell to her side.

"I am no longer young, Dennis," she said sadly. "I am not pretty."

For answer he pointed to his hair and lined face.

There was a silence of many moments, then Dennis Clifford let the rose fall with a sigh.

Miss Bird rushed forward and caught it as it fell.

"I have waited eighteen years for you to come back," she said with a sob. "And did you think I would refuse you when you came?"

Then she went to his arms, and laid her head on his breast.

* * * * *

The inhabitants of the stuccoed villas said a lot of unkind things, but they all came out to stand on the steps the day Miss Bird was married, and Nos. 22 and 26 actually put up clean curtains in honour of the occasion, and threw rice after the departing carriage.

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PICTURE PARAGRAPHS.

All Readers are Asked to Submit Photographs Suitable for Use in this Feature.
Liberal Payment is Made for Accepted Pictures.
Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description of the Subject Illustrated.

TO FIGHT CONSUMPTION.

Out in Colorado is a tent city for consumptives. Every tent faces south, and, apart from any medical treatment they may require, the chief cure prescribed for the patients is fresh air. In fact, fresh air, sunshine, and cheerfulness are the only medicines.

No stoves are allowed in the tents, even in the coldest weather.

Everyone is expected to take cold baths, and to retire to rest by 9 P.M. No one is permitted to discuss his symptoms, or anything whatever to do with consumption.

The tents, in which patients live all the year round, are storm proof and have a flooring. They are scientifically ventilated at the top and bottom, and more air still can be admitted through hinged flaps or panels on the front and sides.

Thus the patient sleeps through the coldest night behind little more than wire-netting.

During the day everyone is outside in the sun. If there is no sun, he goes out all the same and takes in all the fresh air he can. This is one of the rules of the camp, and there is no gainsaying it.

Any patient who refuses to conform to the laws of the tent city, which are like those of the Medes and Persians, is politely requested to leave.

In Colorado, U.S., there is a city composed of about forty-five tents, inhabited by consumptives. They live in these tents during all weathers, and this open air life, with medical treatment, has cured many sufferers.

Photos "*The Pilgrim.*"

An endowed tent is not uncommon. This one is called the "Herbert Spencer" Tent.

A bicycle-tricycle employed in a new and startling form of "looping the loop."

A NEW SENSATION.

"Looping the Loop" and the "Circle of Death" have been succeeded by a fresh sensation, which is illustrated in the photograph above.

A track is built from the highest gallery of a music-hall down to the stage; in the middle of the track there is a gap, over which is suspended an archway. To the accompaniment of a rumbling buzz from the kettledrums of the orchestra, the cyclist descends from the highest point of the track. The slope is exceedingly steep, and by the time the gap is reached the speed of the bicycle is little short of sixty miles per hour.

Now comes the critical moment. The cycle leaves the track and flies into space. The three wheels above the performer's head strike the lower side of the suspended arch, and for a moment we see the laws of gravity set at defiance, for here is a bicycle running along a path that is above it instead of underneath. Scarcely has the audience realised what is happening, when the bicycle once more strikes the sloping track and thus completes its journey to the stage.

To see this thing done, you would certainly say that the performer carries his life in his hands, but as a matter of fact there is comparatively little danger, for all that is required is a strong arm and a very steady nerve.

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A BURMESE PAGODA.

THE Cheyteyo pagoda, in the north of Burmah, has been photographed only twice. It is exceedingly difficult to reach, the path—one cannot call it a road—lying through tangled forest and jungle. In fact, one of the native servants of the photographer whose work we reproduce was carried off by a tiger.

The pagoda is regarded as one of the most sacred in all Asia, for it is alleged by the natives that some of Buddha's hair is buried beneath the rock upon which the edifice has been erected.

In spite of the hardships of the journey, thousands of Burmese come to this shrine every year, and offer as a sacrifice a lock of their hair, which they place inside the pagoda. The interior of the pagoda now is almost filled with locks of all colours. To the European it resembles the storeroom in a Yorkshire wool-combing factory.

Strange are the tales told by the natives concerning this pagoda. They believe that at certain times the rock and pagoda float in the air, exposing to view the hair of Buddha.

Photo *Underwood & Underwood.*

A remarkable pagoda, built on a rock which rests on the very edge of a towering cliff.

Photo *H. G. Lewis.*

This shows the maze of wires above one of London's great telephone exchanges.

TELEPHONE WIRES.

OUR photograph shows the top of the National Telephone Company's "Avenue" Exchange, one of those central stations through which some hundreds of thousands of London's daily telephone messages pass to their destinations after the instruments have been properly connected by the "Hello girl."

The great framework of uprights to which the wires are attached is fastened firmly together, and is also strongly braced up to the surrounding buildings. These precautions are absolutely necessary, for the giant frame has to support not only the weight of the wires themselves, but also the force of the wind and the weather, which is very considerable. The framework is circular in shape and is built on the top of a lofty building, the wires being some seventy or eighty feet from the ground.

When the work of repairing or inspection is being carried on, or when new wires are being put up, a thrilling sight is afforded of mechanics dangling in mid-air, suspended by means of a pulley to an almost invisible wire.

To the man in the street their position appears to be one of extreme peril, but the workmen have nerves of iron, and to them a sense of danger is an unknown quantity.

The bold, thick lines which figure prominently in the photograph are cables made up of a large number of single wires; these cables, it will be observed, are looped up at regular intervals to taut suspending wires.

The original photograph shows the sky to be literally covered by hundreds of thin single wires, which have, however, necessarily been lost in course of reproduction.

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ABORIGINAL TREE-CLIMBERS.

THE Australian aboriginal is something of an enigma. He lives like a beast of the field, without troubling about clothes or houses, and to the casual observer he appears indeed a savage of the lowest type.

Nevertheless, he excels in at least one art—the art of tree-climbing. No human being can beat the black fellow at this game. His object is to catch the 'possums which live in holes in the gum-tree trunks, for these are a favourite food with black men as well as white.

In his left hand the aboriginal, on starting up a gum-tree, holds a vine-hoop cut from the scrub; in his right hand or in his waistband he carries a tomahawk, to be used for chopping out the 'possum. The vine is thrown round the tree, and passed back and knotted behind the climber's neck. Then, by a series of jerks, upward thrusts of the vine, and short runs, the climber swiftly ascends, running up fifty feet in a few seconds, and gripping the tree-bark with wonderful tenacity with his toes.

Preparing for a climb.

Well on his way.

Posing for their photos.

When he wishes to stop climbing and draw a 'possum from its lair, he slips the vine from his neck to his back, and sits in it, with feet firmly pressed against the tree-trunk. In this position he can remain for an hour at a time.

No white man could climb a tree in this way. It is a feat that requires no little skill, and a very great deal of strength and agility. Moreover, it is not a task to be undertaken lightly, for the vine-stem may snap at any moment, and precipitate the climber to the ground beneath.

It is by no means uncommon for Englishmen who are new to the country to attempt to climb a tree in this manner, on the principle, doubtless, that a white man is worth a dozen black.

As we have suggested, the commonest accident under these circumstances is for the vine to break, for the weight of the average white man is considerably more than that of the Australian black. It frequently happens also that the white climber's feet lose their grip on the slippery bark, with the result that his face comes into violent contact with the tree.

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UTAH'S SALT LAKE.

THE Great Salt Lake of Utah, about fifteen miles distant from the Mormon capital, is seventy miles long and thirty miles broad, and is surrounded by mountains and desert.

The lake is steadily drying up. High and dry on the adjacent mountains can be plainly seen lines, which are really beaches, indicating the surface levels of the lake at different bygone periods, when it was vastly greater in extent.

It is impossible for a bather to sink in the Great Salt Lake of Utah.

Though the water looks beautifully clear, it is about 26 per cent. salt, and the effect of this is to render it impossible for a bather to sink.

In our snapshot, the furthest of the three men is floating stationary with head, hands, and feet above the surface—an impossibility in ordinary water. In an upright position, one can float with head and shoulders entirely out of the water. The only danger lies in the head getting under water, which, being heavier in proportion to the rest of the body, it is somewhat inclined to do in the case of non-swimmers. The effect of the salt water in the throat or eyes is most painful.

There are no fishes in the lake; but minute shrimps abound, and also seaweed in places.

The lake is very popular with the people of the surrounding country, and hundreds come to enjoy the novel experience of a swim in its waters.

A WONDERFUL OAK TREE.

ALLOUVILLE, a quaint Norman village, is known chiefly for its wonderful oak, the oldest and biggest in Europe. According to eminent naturalists, it was planted when the Northmen settled in that country nine centuries ago.

It measures exactly fifty feet in circumference at the base. It is still growing, and its foliage covers an area of 288 square yards.

Gales, more than time itself, have played havoc in its verdant crown, which is now only fifty feet above the ground. The lower part of its trunk is hollow, and forty children once found a shelter in the cavity.

In 1696 Monsieur l'Abbé du Détroit transformed this useless excavation into a chapel.

The oldest oak tree in Europe. Its trunk is hollow, and contains two chapels.

This picturesque oratory is nearly ten feet high and twenty feet in circumference. It was daintily wainscoted in the seventeenth century. In 1854 it was restored and provided with an altar, which was consecrated by the then Archbishop of Rouen, who was the first to celebrate mass in it.

The statue of the Holy Virgin, which stands above the altar, is a gift of the Empress Eugénie.

Over the ground-floor chapel there is still another room, called "The Chapel of Calvary," on account of the crucifix, which is one of its chief ornaments.

Between 1889 and 1892 the chapel was restored handsomely.

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THE SKY FLOWER.

The Story of a Blue Carnation.

By Mary L. Pendered.

Jack Lester was clerk in a warehouse at £120 per annum, and a promised rise. He lived in a little, jerry-built villa, one of a row, in a back street on the outskirts of his town, with his wife, Amy, and his baby, Mary Blossom. They kept a small "general" who washed up dishes, answered the bell, helped make the beds, waited at table, and took the daughter of the house out every morning in a small perambulator. This young person was named Evangelina, and in all the length and breadth of England there was not, at the time this story opens, a happier or more contented quartette than Jack, Amy, Mary Blossom, and Evangelina.

For Amy was a capital manager, a good cook and housewife, always busy making or mending. She had a weakness, but then so had Jack. His weakness was for carnations; her weakness was for poetry and romance.

He spent every farthing he could hoard on getting new plants, new pots, compost, etc., for his carnations, and had even knocked off smoking and other small luxuries in order to buy the materials for a tiny conservatory, which he had put up with his own hands against the house wall.

She spent every farthing she could squeeze from her housekeeping on little books of poetry and paper-covered novels. She always called herself "Aimée," though she had been christened in English, and she insisted on the baby being named Blossom. Jack had rebelled to the extent of having the good, solid name of Mary tacked on in front, but Amy would have her called Blossom, and only agreed to the Mary because, she said, it could so easily be converted into May, and nothing could be prettier or more poetic than May Blossom.

But her vein of poetry did not stop at that. She conceived the quaint fancy of pretending that her baby had fallen from the sky and was one of God's flowers sent to bless a mortal home.

"What would mother have done if God hadn't dropped the little Sky Blossom for her to pick up?" she was always asking the unconscious mite and receiving the same answer—a crow.

Jack was not poetic, but he liked the idea and even went so far as to call the baby Sky-bo or Skybe, which she seemed to like very much and tried to say herself. "Where's the little Sky-bo?" was always his first query when he came in from business, and if she heard his voice, Blossom would cry gleefully: "Ky-bo—Ky-bo," while Amy would say, with great dignity: "The Sky Blossom has cut another tooth to-day," or "The Angel Flower has fallen down and bumped her nose," as the case might be.

One day, when the child was nearly two years old, Jack came in to breakfast with a radiant face, and danced a wild war-dance round the table in a manner that endangered all the furniture of the small apartment.

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"I've got him," he cried rapturously, "I've done it! Our fortunes are made, Amy. Sky-bo, kiss your father. Behold a future millionaire!"

The Sky Blossom began to howl with fear, and well she might, poor baby, seeing that her father had gone stark, raving mad. But Amy knew what was the matter, and rejoiced with him. He had hybridised a new carnation.

Now it is necessary to go back and explain a little. For some time Jack had been trying hard to get a cross between two famous carnations, which he had bought cheaply in their earliest youth and brought up by hand, as it were, into big plants. He had gone through all the critical and laborious work of carnation-culture, had isolated his plants, cross-fertilised their blossoms, sown their seeds, watched, weeded out, watered, and, in short, spent every hour he had free from the warehouse in poring over the pots in his tiny greenhouse.

And now, on this happy morning, he had, by great luck, found his reward.

The flower had opened to the May sun and showed itself to be unlike any variety of carnation known to growers. For it was blue—not very blue, almost violet, in fact—but blue enough to be called so in carnation lists. In colour, as a matter of fact, it was not beautiful, but in shape it was, the flower being finely formed, the calyx firm and not liable to split, the petals of waxy thickness. And its scent was delicious. Altogether, Jack knew he had become possessed of a treasure, and was thereby much elated.

He wanted to name the new carnation Sky-bo, at which Amy was much shocked.

"Who would expect anything in a flower with such a vulgar name?" she asked scornfully. "If you want to call it after Blossom why not christen it 'the Sky Flower,' which is lovely, and most appropriate to its blue tint?"

It seemed a good idea, and he agreed.

It always seems as if the Fates are envious of great happiness in mortals, and will not let it last. And thus, a month later, calamity fell upon poor young Lester and crushed him to the earth.

It began with Blossom. The little thing grew mysteriously unwell, refused her food, was fretful and strange, became very thin and white, and developed a curious thickness in the throat. After a few weeks of increasing anxiety, Jack fetched in the doctor, who, when he had examined her, showed a very grave face.

"I'm afraid it is rather serious," he said, "for I find tubercular symptoms. The child must be taken to the sea at once—Margate is best—if she is to avoid an abscess."

The young couple stared at each other aghast. Margate! Where was the money to come from? Could she not be treated at home?

The doctor shook his head, and declared that it was impossible. The case was not an uncommon one, and, if taken in time, he said, the child might grow quite well and strong. But it would probably be necessary to send her to the sea every spring until she had outgrown a certain weakness.

When he had gone Amy wept, but Jack made no moan, only swore that she should take Blossom to Margate next day if he starved for it. There could be no disputing such a verdict. The baby's life was in the balance and nothing else mattered. Amy must go, Jack must live frugally at home and, at the worst, sell his choice carnations.

And so it was settled. He saw them off at the station next day, with a heart so low that it scarcely seemed to have a beat left in it, and the first evening he spent alone in his villa may be better imagined than described.

But even then the envious Fates had not finished with Jack Lester. About a week after seeing his wife and child off at the station he received another staggering blow, this time at the warehouse. For he heard then that his firm had failed and was to be wound up immediately. A few hours later he received a month's notice of dismissal.

Anything more appalling than the future which stared him in the face Jack's imagination failed to picture. At first he had wild thoughts of drowning himself, but they were only momentary. It is not too much to say, however, that if he could have sold his own carcase for any sum that would insure Amy and Blossom enough to live on in the future, he would cheerfully have done so.

He decided not to let Amy know of his misfortune, and he hoped the news would not reach her, for he knew how terribly she would fret over it, and she could do nothing. Besides, he trusted something might turn up. In every possible way he tried to cut down expenses, lived on the cheapest food, drank nothing but weak tea, and would have made Evangelina turn vegetarian with him had not that maiden firmly rebelled.

His friends rallied round him, for Jack was a popular favourite, but he was too wretched to enjoy their hospitality, and their efforts to find him a post met with no success. The

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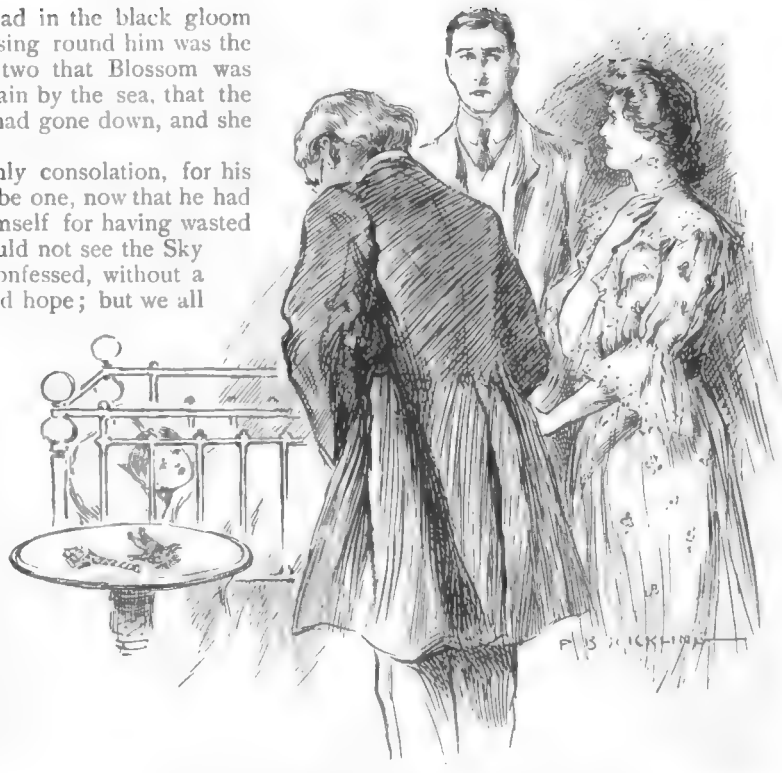
only consolation he had in the black gloom that seemed to be closing round him was the news every day or two that Blossom was growing quite well again by the sea, that the swelling in her throat had gone down, and she was rosy and happy.

Yes, this was his only consolation, for his hobby had ceased to be one, now that he had begun to reproach himself for having wasted money on it. He could not see the Sky Flower, it must be confessed, without a certain thrill of joy and hope; but we all know how, in states of depression, we dare not trust our own hopes and convictions.

He told himself that he had been a fool to think the carnation so wonderful. No doubt, while he was hybridising it, some other man had been doing the same, for why should he suppose that he could be more successful than all the great carnation growers in England and France? So he lost heart in it and would not have sent it up to the National Show had not a friend insisted upon paying its entrance fee and taking it for him. Go himself he could not. It would have been too anguishing to his spirit to see all the beautiful plants he could not afford, and his own probably superseded. Besides, he could not afford the fare. He was, at that time, wondering how to find the next instalment to send Amy, for his work had ceased and he had become, as he told himself bitterly, "one of the unemployed."



Margate! Where was the money to come from?

His cup of misery was filled to overflowing when his friend returned from London with a dejected face, bringing the Sky Flower home unjudged. He had made a stupid mistake and the carnation had reached the show too late for competition. His remorse was profound and he called himself many hard names, trying to comfort Jack with the assurance that, all the same, the carnation had been much noticed and admired.

But Jack was too far submerged in the slough of despond to take comfort from anything. He could only say, with all the forbearance he could muster: "All right, old chap. It can't be helped. I dare say it wouldn't have been any good," and then he showed plainly that he wanted to be left alone. The friend went out, still protesting his penitence, and Jack wrestled with the demon of despair that threatened to overpower him. For this had been his last hope, his last chance.

The carnation on the table before him seemed to mock him with its smiling beauty. He turned his back upon it and gazed into the empty fire-grate. Evangelina came in to lay the supper and he told her he didn't want any. When she had gone back to the kitchen, greatly wondering, he gave up the fight he had maintained with himself so long, and, laying his arms on the table and his head on his arms, sobbed without restraint. For he was weak with fasting and want of sleep, and it seemed to him that there was nothing before him and Amy but to become homeless outcasts, nothing before his little Sky-bo but illness and subsequent death.

As he indulged in the last relief of manhood, a sharp peal at his front-door bell roused him quickly, and he sprang up in a spasm of shame. To be caught like this! Before Evangelina could open the door he rushed

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upstairs, and there, on the threshold of his lonely bedroom, he had another fright and horror that made his heart beat still more violently. For he thought he saw Amy kneeling by the bed weeping, and the idea flashed through his mind that Blossom was dead. He had, indeed, fallen into a morbid state, and the next instant he knew it. For the white thing he had supposed to be Amy was only his night-clothes laid on the side of his bed by Evangelina, as she had been taught to do, and the room was empty.

"If you please, sir," said her voice at the door, when he was plunging his face in water, "here's a gentleman wants to see you particular. He won't give no name."

Jack went down after a few minutes, feeling horribly shamefaced, and confronted a man who stood up in his sitting-room, a stranger.

"Mr. John Lester, I believe," he said, "and the grower of the carnation, Sky Flower, exhibited to-day at the National Show in London?"

"You are wrong," said Jack, in a hoarse voice, "it was not shown. It arrived too late."

"It is you who are wrong, Mr. Lester," said the stranger decisively, "for the carnation *was* shown, though it wasn't judged, and that's why I am here. Not to waste time—what do you want for it?"

The room seemed to turn a sort of somersault before Jack's smarting eyes, as his hopes sprang once more to full life. But he kept himself well in hand and said, quite calmly:

"I'm not sure that I want to sell it outright."

"I'll give you two hundred pounds for it," said the stranger.

Jack was no fool, and he grasped the significance of this offer in a flash. All his old visions began to flower like a garden in June, dazzling his mind with glory.

"Not enough," he responded coolly.

"Five hundred."

"I want one thousand pounds for my Sky Flower," said Jack, with finality.

"Don't you wish you may get it?" sneered the stranger with an unpleasant laugh, but Jack stood his ground undaunted, sublime in his renewed faith.

"One thousand pounds; and I part with it for that sum only on agreement that my name shall be attached to the Sky Flower on all lists, and that I am permitted to keep one plant for private growing," said Jack.

"Is that all?" asked his visitor sarcastically, and, as Jack was silent, he continued: "You have a mighty good opinion of your flower, Mr. Lester, but let me tell you it has to be a very remarkable carnation to fetch one thousand pounds in the market."

"It *is* a very remarkable carnation," was Jack's answer. "The Lady Mélisande, one of its parents, was sold for two thousand pounds, and was a far less uncommon sport. The Sky Flower is the first blue carnation."

"How do you know that?"

The question was a poser to Jack, so he ignored it and merely said again: "The price of my plant is one thousand pounds. Take it or leave it."

His breath came quickly after this desperate bid for fortune. He was excited to the last degree, and could hardly keep his teeth from chattering. But he set them firmly, and gripped the back of his chair, for both men had remained standing. At the end of a silence that seemed an age to Jack his visitor said:

"I'll take it. But you ask an extortionate price, Mr. Lester, and I don't expect ever to see my money back."

Jack smiled, knowing how much this statement was worth. On being told his customer's name, a man renowned in England as one of her greatest horticulturists and carnation growers, he realised how near he had been to losing a wonderful opportunity. For if such a man would come to him, all the way from London, and at that time of night, in order to obtain possession of the Sky Flower, it was certain that he did not really think one thousand pounds too much to pay for it, considering the fabulous prices that are continually given for new varieties. And Jack might have taken five hundred, or even two, in his desperate need! He was thankful he had held out.

When his visitor was gone he began to tremble violently, and could hardly stand. He had eaten very little all day, and the strain he had been under for the last hour had exhausted him. Now that the tension was relaxed, he staggered and had to hold on by the chairs and tables.

There was a bottle of home-made wine in the little cupboard of the sitting-room, and he felt for it blindly. A drink revived him. He found bread and cheese in the pantry, and ate the first hearty meal he had enjoyed since Amy went away. Then he went to bed and dropped asleep.

* * * * *

Next day he went down to Margate, to Amy's surprise and delight. She purred over

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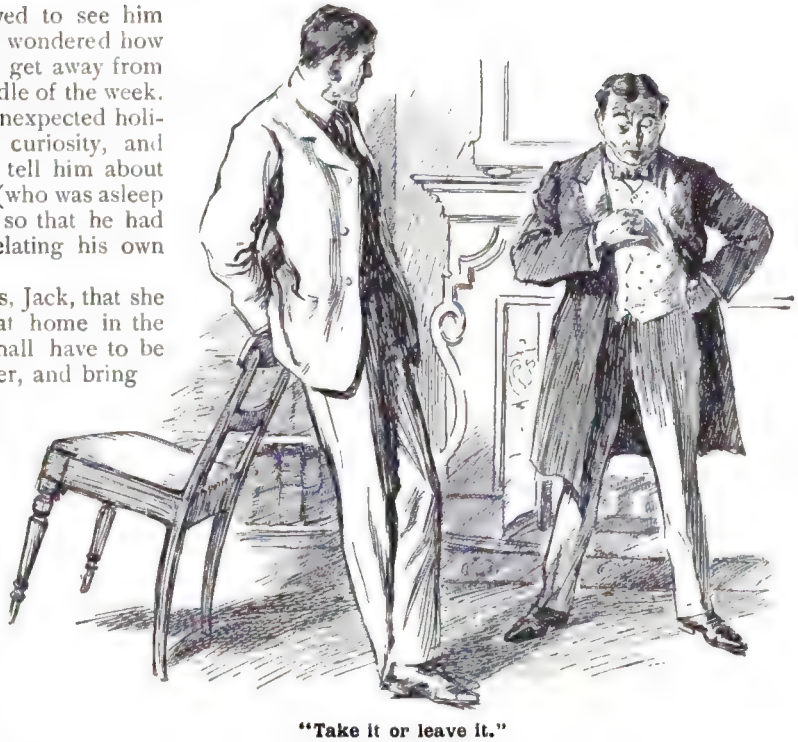
him tenderly, grieved to see him looking so thin, and wondered how he had managed to get away from business in the middle of the week. The fiction of an unexpected holiday appeased her curiosity, and then she began to tell him about little May Blossom (who was asleep in the next room), so that he had small chance of relating his own news at first.

"The doctor says, Jack, that she may be all right at home in the summer, but we shall have to be very careful with her, and bring her here at the least sign of debility. Oh, Jack, how shall we be able to afford it?"

"I think the best plan will be," he answered, "to come and settle here altogether."

"Jack! And give up your business! What should we live on?"



"Take it or leave it."

"Carnations," said Jack.

A smile, that would have been a sneer in a less sweet woman, crossed her pretty face.

"I'm afraid, dear, they would be very poor fare," she replied.

And then he could keep himself bottled up no longer.

"Amy, I've sold the Sky Flower for a thousand pounds," he cried. She gave a little scream of joy.

"Oh, Jack, you haven't—it can't be true."

"It is—it is." He seized her in his arms and they danced a wild waltz round the table in the tiny lodging-house room.

Then, breathless, they sat opposite each other, panting and laughing like children.

"It's quite true," gasped Jack, "and as I came down here to-day I made up my mind to take a place in this district, and start carnation growing in earnest. They like the seaside, and Skybe likes it, and you like it, and I like everything you like. So there you are! We'll be rich some day."

(And so they were, after years of pleasant and steady toil on his part.)

"And what about the business, Jack?" she asked, fearing lest he might be throwing away substance for a shadow. For she was a wise little person in spite of her sentimentality.

He told her, then, all that had happened, and her face fell into serious puckers at the thought of what he had been through. At the end of his speech she said softly, in a voice that trembled:

"Jack dear, don't you think God must really have sent us that flower from the sky to save our darling, our May Blossom?"

"The little Sky-bo!" he exclaimed tenderly, his eyes beginning to glisten at the thought of her. And a wonderful light was upon both their faces.

At that moment a small girl had awakened from sleep in the next room, behind folding-doors, and she caught the sound of a well-known word in a well-known voice.

"Daddy—come—Ky-bo!" she sang out lustily.

And nobody will need to be told what happened then.

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MR. —HIS PAGES.

Being—Popular Pages of Perplexing Problems, Puns, Puzzles, and Playful Posers, Propounded for the Perusal of Perspicacious Persons, Particularly those Pining to Procure Puzzle Penknives, Puzzle Purses, and Packs of Playing Cards.

Puzzle Penknives, Puzzle Purses, or Packs of ROYAL Playing Cards, will be given as prizes to readers who forward new puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X," and wishing for a reply should inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" (care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE), 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

TO CATCH A BACHELOR.

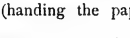
SMITH: "I say, Robinson, I've been taking a lesson in magic. Would you like me to tell you what your future wife's name will be?"

ROBINSON: "Yes, if you can. But how shall I know if you are right?"

SMITH: "There'll be no doubt about it. Now, please write down on a piece of paper your age, your mother's age, your father's age, and the ages of your brothers and sisters. Add them together. Divide by a hundred. Subtract $77\frac{7}{10}$. Done that? Let me see the result."

ROBINSON (handing the paper): "Here you are."

SMITH (examining it carefully. Slowly): "Your—future—wife's—name—will—be—Mrs. Robinson!"



FOR ARTISTS WHO CAN'T DRAW!

Clever though "Mr. X" is, he has no artistic talent—he cannot draw; sometimes he wishes he could.

Thinking he may have many readers similarly placed in this respect, he now presents them with a scheme by which the most inartistic can draw a most beautiful picture.

Here it is:

Can you make an accurate likeness of a sailor, using nothing more than two circles, two squares, and two triangles?

"Mr. X" can, and he hereby offers a prize of Five Shillings to the sender of what is, in his opinion, the best attempt drawn as he has described.

Drawings must be sent on postcards addressed to "Mr. X," care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., must be marked "Sailor," and must reach him by October 20th.

HARMLESS.

SIMPSON: "I rode clean over a bottle when I was biking yesterday, and fairly smashed it."

STIMSON: "Punctured badly, eh?"

SIMPSON: "Punctured! It was a blue-bottle; didn't I say that?"

A PUZZLE POEM.

Weatherhead, heatherside,
Together, together, her ewe tried.

[*This was a neat little rhyme and perfect sense when I wrote it down, but the printers have run the letters together in the most extraordinary way. Who can separate the words again? Letters and punctuation are in their proper order.*—MR. "X."]

A STAMPEDE FOR STAMPS.

AUGUSTUS: "Well, the new government has done one jolly good thing. Do you know that you can now get thirteen stamps for a shilling at any post-office?"

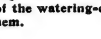
ALGERNON: "Can you really?"

AUGUSTUS: "Yes, really. Eleven penny and two half-penny?"

***Q.* Why is an undergraduate like a goose?**
***A.* Because he feeds on commons and sometimes gets plucked.**

SUBTRACTION BY ADDITION.

Add two figures to 51 so as to make it less than seven.



***Q.* Who is the Queen of the roses?**
***A.* The rose of the watering-can; because it rains (reigns) over them.**

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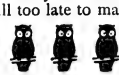
WELL!

Have you ever noticed how frequently the word "Well" is used in ordinary conversation? Just get up a competition with a friend over it. Whoever says "Well" first is to give the other a shilling. You will find every sentence you say has to be thought over carefully lest it makes you lose the shilling. But, indeed, we use the word "Well" so frequently that, though both you and your friend are on the look out to catch one another, many chances will go by unperceived till too late to make a claim.



A Burning Question.

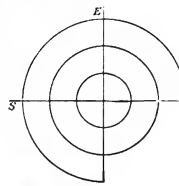
FRED: "I say, have you heard the joke about the red-hot cinder?"

TOM: "No. Tell me."

FRED: "Well — Oh, no, it's no good telling you, you couldn't grasp it."

Circling the Circ.

Here is a diagram which it is required to trace without lifting the pencil from the paper. Start at S and end at E. You must not go over any line more than once.



Q. When is a black horse? (hoarse)
A. When he has a cold.

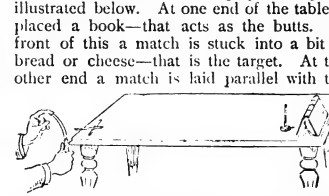
All Done by Water.

Bend a match without quite breaking it in two so that, placed over the mouth of a bottle, it will support a sixpence. Now challenge anybody to get the sixpence into the bottle without touching the match, sixpence, or bottle with the hand or with any instrument.

When they have said "*I* can't do it," let a drop of water fall on the bent end of the match; its two extremities will then slowly draw apart and—bang goes sixpence!

The Home Rifle Butts.

"Mr. X" enjoyed some huge fun the other evening at a house where he played the game illustrated below. At one end of the table is placed a book—that acts as the butts. In front of this a match is stuck into a bit of bread or cheese—that is the target. At the other end a match is laid parallel with the



edge of the table. Across this is laid another match with one end protruding slightly—that is the bullet. Now, by bending back and releasing sharply against the bullet the blade of a table-knife, the bullet is shot along the table at the target. One point for hitting the target, two for knocking it over.

A Moving Event.

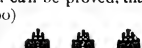
SMITH MINOR: "My sister sometimes cries when she reads a book. I never thought I should, but I know a volume that I bet would bring tears to your eyes."

JONES MAJOR: "I bet it wouldn't. What is it?"

SMITH MINOR: "A volume of smoke."

To Prove 12 an Odd Number.

Eleven is an odd number, and it is very certain, and can be proved, that twelve is one two (one too)



No Cause for Alarm.

WOOD: "I say, when our Vicar was leaving the pulpit last Sunday he came down head over heels."

FOREST: "No! was he much hurt?"

WOOD: "Not a bit. Why should he have been hurt? He would have been, though, if he'd come down heels over head."

This and That.

If this and that, half this and that, and seven make eleven, how many are this and that?

RESULTS.

A Puzzle Poem: We at her head, he at her side,
Together, to get her, here we **tried.**

Subtraction by Addition: $5^{1}1_{2}$.

This and That: Two and two-thirds.

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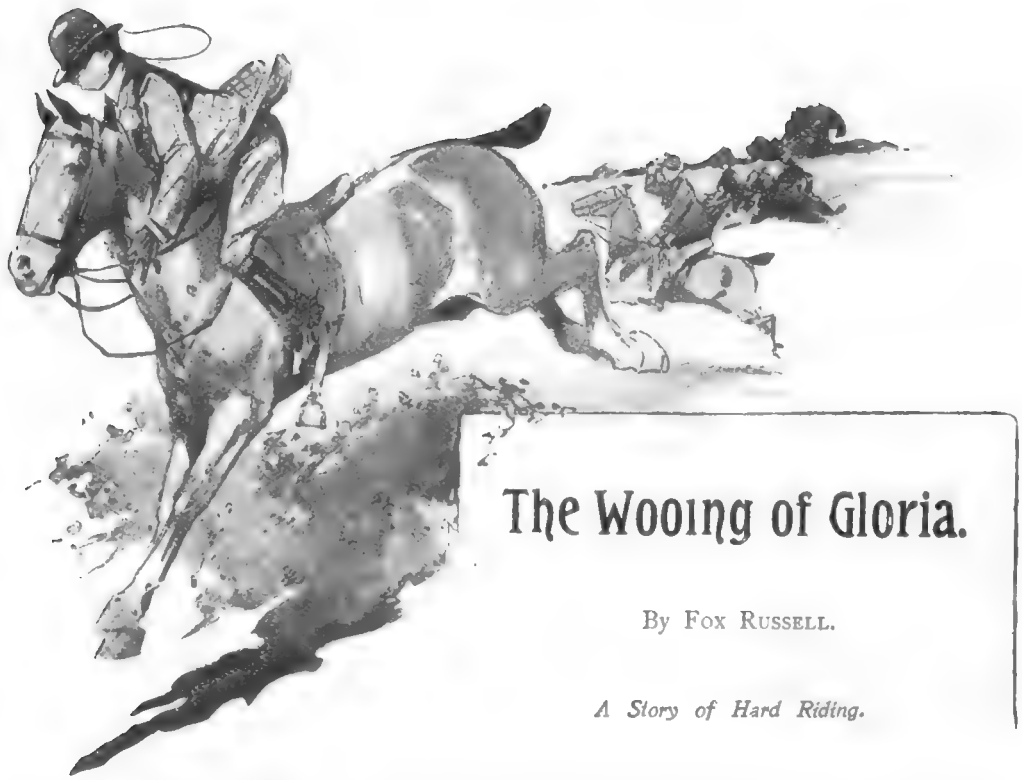

The Wooing of Gloria.

By Fox Russell.

A Story of Hard Riding.

Of course, I fully understood when I first became engaged to Gloria that she was cast in an heroic mould; the difficulty was to make her understand that I was *not*. We have all heard of the round peg in the square hole, and in making Gloria a member of the weaker sex, whilst I was fashioned in the likeness of a man, Nature gave us a living exemplification of the saying. Gloria was emphatically meant to be a warrior—I, just as emphatically, was not. I am a man of peace; in fact, rather a—I mean a bit of a f—well, very cautious, let us say, very cautious indeed. I am persuaded that if you do not look out for your own safety, no one will do so for you.

Gloria was the only child and heiress of Squire Scourfield, one of the best sportsmen and hardest riders in Northamptonshire. Accustomed from her earliest riding days to following her father across country, the girl was absolutely fearless of danger. This fact, coupled with her skill as a horsewoman, her splendid health, and well-developed body, made her—in my eyes, at least—appear as a kind of Goddess Diana, and my always too susceptible heart was at once enslaved.

It is said that people always like their "opposites." I was not, as I have already said, heroic; but Gloria always was.

I was staying at the house of an old friend of mine, Lady Tibblesay, and taking a prominent part each night in the charades, round games, musical chairs, and other pleasant indoor pastimes with which we beguiled our time, and one morning our hostess suggested that we should all drive out to the meet of the West Northshire Foxhounds.

"I am sorry I can't offer to mount anybody with the hounds," she said smilingly, "but I've no hunters, only carriage horses. Can you all be ready, good people, at 10.30? It'll take us half-an-hour to drive to the meet."

Arrived on the scene of action, my attention was at once attracted by a very handsome girl on a chestnut horse, which fidgeted about in a most uncomfortable fashion. The chestnut's neck was already covered with sweat and foam, the result of nervous excitement, and I could not repress a slight shudder as I pictured to myself the dangers which probably lay before its adventurous rider.

Presently the girl caught sight of Lady

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Tibblesay, seated opposite me in the landau (I had chosen to go in my hostess' carriage rather than the dogcart, not because it was safer, but I thought it would look more polite), and rode up. They shook hands, and Lady Tibblesay at once introduced me. From that moment I was Gloria Scourfield's slave. I would have gone through fire and water (of course, if the water were not too deep, I mean, as I cannot swim) to serve her. She chatted to me almost exclusively, after the first minute, as Major Magill ranged up on the other side of our carriage and monopolised my hostess' attention.

In reply to Miss Scourfield's question as to whether hunting wasn't just the best thing in life, I unblushingly replied that I thought it adorable, though, as a matter of fact, I had never seen hounds before.

"Why aren't you out?" she asked suddenly.

Somewhat mystified, I replied that I *was* out—out in the carriage.

She curled up her beautiful lip disdainfully, and said:

"Why aren't you out hunting, I mean?"

"Er—why—well, you see, I've no hunter here, and——"

"Oh, I see. Father," she called suddenly, to a red-faced, hard-bitten old fellow in pink, just riding past her, "I want to introduce Mr. Meake, who hasn't got his horses here—isn't it a pity?—just going into a bit of our best country, too."

"Morning," grunted the Squire to me, after raising his hat to Lady Tibblesay; "should you like to see a bit of sport here? If so, I've a nice young horse, that would carry your weight like a feather. Let's see, Tuesday—Tuesday's the biggest country we've got—sure to have plenty of fun—will you come over at 9.0 to my place——"

But at that moment, not even for Gloria, would I dare the risk. I dashed in with—

"My dear Mr. Scourfield, I can't tell you how delighted I should be, but—I *must* be in London on Monday at latest."

"Ah, that's a pity, that's a great pity—you'd not have spent a dull day, I can promise you."

Of that I felt quite assured!

During what was, to the equestrians, a tiresome wait whilst hounds were "drawing" (whatever that may mean), I escaped from the carriage, and on foot accompanied Miss Scourfield to the edge of the wood, where we talked in whispers. She was too delightful for words, but I regretted that she *would* constantly sing the praises of deeds of "derring-do" (I have always wondered what "derring-do" means) in, and out of, the hunting-field.

To my great delight, I found that she and her father were to dine at Lady Tibblesay's that night, and when the idiot in the red coat, with the couples attached to his saddle, stood up in his stirrups yelling "Tally ho!"—as though he were making some really important announcement—she had actually said that there was something about me which was different from any other man she had ever known! Well, I wasn't surprised at that, for probably her lot had been cast almost entirely amongst a set of hard-headed, fox-hunting squires, and she knew nothing intellectual, nothing of the small refinements, none of the delicacy of touch, which so eminently distinguished men of my own set in town.

On the road home, I confided to dear Lady Tibblesay my immense admiration for her young friend—whereupon she laughed, shook her head reprovingly, and declared she should tell Gloria that very night. We had a spirited controversy on the subject, and finally my hostess—an inveterate match-maker—said that I really must stop on with her and "improve the shining hour" with the heiress. And, completely forgetting the excuse I had already made to the Squire for declining his hunting invitation, I gratefully agreed.

That evening passed like a dream. Gloria Scourfield was allotted to me to take in to dinner, and we certainly made the most of our time. When the ladies left the table, I was suddenly recalled to things of earth again by the voice of Squire Scourfield.

"I hear you're stopping on, Mr. Meake. That's lucky, for now you'll be able to come out and show us all the way along on Tuesday. I shall be able to put you on that chestnut horse my daughter rode to-day—he carried her alarmin'."

Despite the champagne I had drunk, my heart sank down into the region of my boots. To be carried across country "alarmin'" was, to me, a terrifying prospect indeed, but remembering my inamorata's predilection for sport and courage, I searched vainly for any path which would lead me out of danger, but give me "Peace with Honour." Then I smiled in rather sickly fashion, and murmured that I had no riding things.

"Oh, plenty of time to send for 'em," rejoined the Squire heartily. And then he turned to his left-hand neighbour with some bucolic remark anent the turnips.

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Now I did possess a riding kit of sorts, for I ride in the Park for an hour each morning, and, of course, I *could* send for the things in plenty of time, but I didn't want to. I racked my brain for some decent excuse, but to no purpose. On seeing Gloria to the Scourfield carriage, an hour later, she distinctly returned the pressure of my hand, and whispered: "Don't be late on Tuesday morning. We've a great desire to find a fox in one of our own coverts, and I hope it'll come off."

I hoped most earnestly that *I* shouldn't!

On the fatal day I faced breakfast with a somewhat indifferent appetite. My tongue felt parched, and I positively recoiled from the sight of eggs and bacon. Nothing but dry toast found favour in my eyes. I drank five cups of tea, and when the dogcart came round I got into it feeling like a lamb led to the slaughter.

The Squire received me on the steps as I alighted, feeling, perhaps, more solemn than I had ever felt before in my life. My host slapped me on the back—I wished he would not—somehow, my mood did not seem to jump with this form of salutation.

"Come in and have a cherry brandy to keep the cold out. The horses'll be round in five minutes. Ah, here's Gloria—only follow her over the fences, and you'll be all right. There are not many places in this country big enough to stop my daughter."

The old fellow's red face glowed with pride as he made this blood-curdling statement. The man must have been utterly devoid of proper feeling in expecting *me*—ME—to jump these horrible, cut-throat obstacles.

The ginger-coloured wretch I was to ride—so unlike my own gentle, ambling Rosinante at home—danced first on one leg, then on the other. I, with one foot in the stirrup, also danced about in frantic efforts to get upon the brute's back, and it was not until we had pretty well covered the whole of the drive, and the most part of the flower-beds as well, in our joint terpsichorean efforts, that I was enabled to even make a spring at the saddle.

I regret to say that this effort was entirely unsuccessful, and only resulted in my hitting my nose somewhat sharply on the flap. Then the groom, who had been holding the horse's head, suggested giving me "a leg up"—which is not quite so simple a business as it looks. In fact, there is a process of much intricacy to be surmounted before one succeeds. The groom took hold of my left shin and gave me a vigorous hoist—but he was too energetic (though meaning well, I am sure). The lift conveyed me lightly through the air, right over the horse's back, and down to the ground again on the other side.

However, the next attempt was more successful, and we started off, my chestnut fidgeting and sidling all the way to the meet. Even when, after arriving there, I "barged" into the M.F.H.'s horse, and was heartily cursed for so doing, I still felt comparatively happy, and sunned myself contentedly in Gloria's smiles. I had struck upon a plan by which I hoped to evade "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" in the coming run, and determined to put it into execution as soon as opportunity offered.

A foxy youth, riding a big grey, hovered continually round my divinity, evidently trying to obtain speech with her; but, to my great joy, Gloria had eyes and ears only for me. The foxy one—who I afterwards found out was a certain Lord Eric Flatfoot—clearly stood no chance.

Hounds were thrown into covert, and I gradually sidled my horse further and further away from Gloria's. I had almost got round to the opposite side of the wood, when first one hound spoke, quickly followed by another; then a whole swelling chorus of hound music quickly fell upon my expectant ear, together with wild shouts from the huntsman and whips, lyrically exhorting them to "Eleu in!" "Push him out, then!" "Hoic, hoic to him!" etc., etc.

Hounds apparently *did* "Hoic"—whatever that may mean—for presently they all came tumbling out of covert, almost falling over each other in their frantic haste. Not far behind them followed the huntsman, and away they went, across a light piece of ploughed land. Then came a whipper-in, admonishing two or three stray hounds to "Get away on! Get away on to him!"

The thoughtless wretch cracked his long-thonged whip, and the creature I was on gave a violent hoist of his heels, forwarding me well up his neck, and shooting my hat over my eyes. Away went the chestnut, a little to the right of the pack. Across the ploughed field I galloped, well in advance of the rest; and on the far side my horse safely jumped a terrific post and rails nearly three feet high. I again flew up his neck, but got back safely into the saddle somehow, and then, passing a small copse, I put my plan into execution.

Availing myself of the wood's friendly shelter, I pulled up and quickly rode through

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a gateway into a lane. Taking up a fine strategic position behind a haystack, I cautiously watched (as well as the fidgety brute I was on would permit) the progress of the chase as the others swept by me.

Right at the head of the flying column came the huntsman, closely followed by Gloria Scourfield, her beautiful face aflame with excitement; then two men in scarlet and, a short distance behind them again, the Squire, as keen as a boy of fifteen; and, at intervals, the rest of the field.

As they galloped past me, the Squire roared out to his daughter:

"Seems to me that Meake has cut us all down, the artful beggar, and got away on a line of his own!"

Gloria only turned in her saddle momentarily, to nod her acquiescence. They evidently thought I was a deuce of a hard rider across country. Nothing could be more fortunate for me.

As soon as the last of the bobbing black and red coats were safely out of sight, I cautiously left my coign of vantage behind the haystack, and rode along the lane, the restless chestnut threatening every moment to bolt with me. However, when hounds had been gone about half-an-hour, the horse began to settle down more soberly, much to my relief of mind (and body, for I was nearly worn out with the constant "tewing" in the saddle). I entered a little village about two miles beyond where I had left hounds, and pulled up at a blacksmith's forge.

I beckoned to the smith—no, he wasn't brawny, this one—contrary to all received axioms on the subject, this particular smith was a comparative weakling, and had a face the colour of an underdone pie-crust.

"Just see if all my shoes are on, will you?" I said with affected anxiety.

He tried them all in turn. Then, scratching his head, he replied:

"They're all right, sir; what's the matter with them?"

Disregarding his question, I slipped off the merciless saddle, glad even of a moment's respite.

"Just take off the near hind shoe," I directed.

He wrenched it off, not without a struggle,

I . . . danced about in frantic efforts to get upon the brute's back.

for it was very firmly fastened, and then stood looking at me, pincers in hand.

I gave him a shilling and pocketed the shoe. Then I painfully resumed my seat in the saddle, asked the way to Squire Scourfield's place, and proceeded slowly in the direction indicated.

An hour later, I rode into the Squire's stableyard, carrying the loose shoe in my hand. A groom ran out to take my horse, and I looked at him with reproachful eyes.

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"What, lost a shoe, sir?" he began, when I struck in:

"You should always see to a hunter's shoes the very last thing before sending him out," I said.

"Well, sir, our stud-groom, sir, he always do—but there! a hunter's shoe don't take much wrenching off, do it?"

"This one did"—I began, but hastily corrected myself—"this one, I mean, came off when——"

"Ah, I know, sir, when you was galloping through that there clay stuff round by Polden Fields. It's enough to pull a 'orse's 'oof off, let alone his shoe!"

I said nothing, but resigning my horse—oh, so gladly—I "tipped" the groom, and walked into the house.

When the Squire and Gloria arrived home, late in the afternoon, after enjoying a rattling gallop, I cut short their duet of—

"Why, we saw you right in front, at first!" "Where did you get to?" "How did the horse carry you?" etc., etc., by silently holding up the horseshoe, with a melancholy air. Whereupon the burden of their song immediately changed to "Oh, *what* hard luck!" "Really, it must have been maddening, after getting such a splendid start and all!" and other like well-meant condolences.

But it was "Peace with Honour," and I posed successfully (and cheaply) as a desperately hard rider, whose luck had turned against him, that day. And I determined that *that* day should be the *last* day! No more of "tempting Providence" in the hunting field, for me!

Gloria's admiration of my character after this rose by leaps and bounds. I dined at Scourfield Hall that night—and so did the foxy youth. He was deeply enamoured—it was easy to see that—and it was equally easy to see that the Squire favoured his suit. Still, so long as Gloria favoured mine, I didn't care a rap.

Less than a fortnight afterwards, I proposed to Gloria and was accepted—provisionally.

"I'm afraid we shall have trouble with father. His mind is set upon my marrying Eric," she said.

"The foxy youth?" I cried in dismay.

She laughed, and showed her glorious white teeth.

"But I shall marry the man I choose," she resumed determinedly. "Father has a will of his own—so have I. Go into his room now, and ask his consent. At the worst, he can only throw you out of the window." (I shivered.) "If he refuses, I have something to propose. All *you* have to do now is to ask him."

"All," in this instance seemed a rather tougher proposition in my eyes than it appeared in Gloria's.

"Er—shall I go *now*, do you think?" I began somewhat feebly. "Perhaps this is not a favourable moment for——"

"Very well, then," she assented, "wait until to-morrow morning, after father's interview with his bailiff—he usually works off his superfluous bad temper on him—then will be the time to attack."

I was about to embrace her for allowing me to postpone the evil day, when she checked me, saying:

"Not at present, thank you. 'To be continued in our next,' as the papers say."

That night I was to sleep at Scourfield Hall after a delightful evening passed in Gloria's society.

About eleven o'clock I retired for the night, and in the solitude of my chamber I must confess that the thought of facing the Squire on the morrow troubled me very seriously. And yet it had to be done or I should lose Gloria for ever. I have a heart—a tender heart. But I have also a skin—a tender skin—and the thought of the hoisting him with his own petard in connection with 'the window' kept me awake till the small hours of the morning.

The clock had just struck two, and I was dropping off to sleep, when a faint tapping sounded at my door. I always act promptly—to put my head beneath the bed-clothes was the work of a moment. I—I think one can always concentrate one's attention so much better in that position. The tapping continued, and grew more insistent. At last, a female voice, in frightened tones, bleated out:

"Oh, please sir, do sir, come sir; I b'leeve there's someone's broke into the 'ouse, sir!"

I felt rather clammy about the temples. I have no taste for scenes of brutal violence, and, under the circumstances, did not care to be left quite alone. Not that I feared anything—oh, dear, no—but still, Man is a gregarious animal, and I got out of bed nimbly, threw on a dressing-gown, and cautiously opened the door.

Two wretched kitchen wenches stood shivering outside. I was about to speak, when a light suddenly appeared at the other end of the gallery. With dismal groans the maids sank nerveless on the mat. I maintained an upright attitude, although I experienced a slight tendency on the part of my

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knees to knock together—that is, to touch one another at frequent intervals. Then relief came—the light approached near enough to enable us to see that it was a candle carried by Gloria Scourfield.

My knees felt firm again in a moment,

"Then you heard the noise," she whispered, "and it was not my fancy. Unluckily, you're the only man sleeping in this part of the house to-night—my father's room is in the east wing. Just take this revolver"—I handled it very gingerly—"and hunt round to see if you can discover any burglars."

I gasped out: "Oh, certainly—er—is—is — this — this thing loaded?"

"Yes, in every chamber," replied Gloria, with business-like alacrity.

"If you please, miss, can we go and shut ourselves into the hattics?" asked one of the scullery-maids in trembling tones.

"Attics? No, fools, stay where you are," returned the girl imperiously. "Now, Augustus"—turning to me—"are you ready?"

"Ye-e-s," I began, when a sound of muffled voices struck on our listening ears.

"That's from downstairs," muttered Gloria.

"I think *not*," I said unblushingly, though I felt quite certain she was right. "I—I think the sound came from *up*stairs. I'll go and see."

And before she could say any more, I hastily clambered up the stairs, and, in full view of my *fiancée*, boldly grasped the handle of the first door on the landing. I meant to defer, as long as possible, the awful moment for descending the main staircase and facing the midnight marauders, probably now lurking behind the men in armour in the gloomy, oak-wainscoted hall. So, determining to delay matters by pretending to search the top room, I flung open the door with a clatter—and came face-to-face with two masked burglars!

I had made exactly eighteen steps in mounting that staircase, and I took three to come down. The revolver went off—apparently of its own accord, as I certainly don't remember pulling the trigger—the scullery-maids shrieked. Gloria called me by name imperatively — but the instinct of self-preservation was paramount, and would not be denied. I sped on down the staircase, through the hall (nearly bowling over the advancing Squire), and thence out into the night.

I had made exactly eighteen steps in mounting that staircase, and I took three to come down.

* * * * *

Since then I have never encountered Squire Scourfield (and I don't want to), but yesterday's *Morning Post* contained a harrowing announcement—no less than the marriage of Gloria to—alas, and alack, and woe is me!—the foxy youth himself!

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SURVIVORS' TALES OF GREAT EVENTS

Miss Greta Williams, who tells this story.

No. XXI.—THE LOSS OF THE "STELLA."

From the Narrative of Miss Greta Williams, as Told to Walter Wood.

No sea tragedy of recent years caused a more profound sensation than the loss of the *Stella*, one of the steamboats of the London and South-Western Railway Company engaged in the Channel Islands service. A fine new twin-screw vessel of a thousand tons, she was making the first daylight trip of the year from Southampton to Guernsey on March 30th, 1899. In a dense fog, going full speed, she ran on to the Black Rock, one of the fatal Casquets group, and sank in seven minutes. Her commander (Captain Reeks) and 104 other persons were drowned, out of 140 passengers and a crew of forty. Miss Greta Williams, the well-known vocalist, was amongst the survivors who were saved, after fifteen hours' exposure in a small, overcrowded boat. She attracted world-wide attention by singing to her companions in the boat, in the bitter darkness of the night, "O Rest in the Lord."

A joyous holiday party we were, numbering more than a hundred people, as we steamed out of Waterloo Station that Thursday morning before Good Friday. The short railway run was quickly over, and by noon we were steaming down Southampton Water in the *Stella*. The sun shone brightly on the deepening green of field and foliage, and the sharp, fresh sea breeze was a tonic for many a traveler who was hastening from the dull and stuffy town to seek a rest in the Channel Islands.

As we cut swiftly through the water—the *Stella* was an eighteen-knot boat, which is more than twenty miles an hour—I am sure there was not one of us who anticipated anything but a fast and safe voyage. We were due in Guernsey before it was dark, which meant about seven hours on board, and most of us settled down at once and made ourselves as cosy as we could.

I and my sister Theresa, who was traveling with me, went early in the afternoon to lie down in our private cabin, as the air was very cold. The sun was vanishing, and the outlook was very unpromising because of one of those dangerous fogs which infest the Channel. The fog thickened, and our syren hooted dismally at intervals as we steamed rapidly ahead into the ghostly, clammy atmosphere.

Nearly five hours had passed since we sailed, and we were still going smoothly ahead when, without the slightest warning, there came a strange, grinding sound and a shock, which even the merest landsman knew was not caused by the sea. The check to our easy running, the sudden cries we heard, the hurrying of feet, and many dismaying noises told us that something terrible had happened.

My sister and I hurried from our cabin to the deck, and instantly the blanched faces of the people we saw rushing about or staring wildly confirmed our fears. Yet even then I did not realise the peril we were in. There was not anything which you could call panic, although everything was in a state of commotion. The very ship seemed affected, for she trembled like a living thing, and there was a dreadful and unnerving noise from her engines, which were still working.

Before I could collect my thoughts there was another grinding crash. This was due, as I knew afterwards, to the fact that the *Stella*, after first striking, left the rocky ledge and struck again. She was injured amidships, in her most vital parts, and traveling as she was traveling the damage was so extensive that the sea poured into the hull in enormous quantities.

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Every startled voice and every pallid face asked the same question. What had happened? Where were we? Then the terrible truth was flashed about—that we were on the Casquets, those dreaded rocks, eight miles west of Alderney, which for centuries have been the terror of the boldest sailors. Even in clear weather they are a peril, because of the strong swirls and eddies caused by the Channel tides about them; while in that greatest of the sailor's foes, a fog, they are an appalling danger.

Whatever hope there might have been of salvation when the first shock was sustained, vanished when the *Stella* struck again. No knowledge of the sea was needed to tell us of the peril into which we were plunged. The loud orders for the boats to be lowered at once destroyed the confidence of the stoutest hearts in the security of the ship; because the very utterance of the words by those who were the ablest judges—the captain and his officers—pronounced her death-knell.

Dimly, in that ghastly gloom, I saw the cause of our destruction—the grey, snarling eddies, and the hideous fangs of the Black Rock, which just showed like an evil smile as the waves rolled over them, and which were hidden almost as soon as their presence was guessed. These were the monster's teeth which had ripped the *Stella's* thin steel framework just as you might tear your fingers through a tautened sheet of paper.

It was all so swift, so awful, so overwhelming, that even now, seven years afterwards, I do not find it possible to form a clear mental picture of everything that happened. But there are some incidents which are branded on my memory for life. There were the voices of the officers, who, while they were directing the lowering of the boats, were cheering us with the assurance that not a life would be lost, that we should all get clear of the ship, and either be picked up or make land. But I am sure they never believed what they were saying, because there was not even a member of the crew who thought that the *Stella* would not keep afloat long enough for all of us to leave her.

Even as soon as we rushed from our cabin we saw that lifebelts were being given out, and that the crew were working furiously at the boats to get them lowered. There was nothing that you could call panic; and there were many glorious examples of British pluck and unselfishness. There was a splendid Englishman, Mr. Barnes, whose courage and help, I doubt not, largely contributed to saving my sister and myself. Lifebelts, as you know, are kept in most ships stowed away in lockers, which are convenient to reach in an emergency. These lockers are mostly made with open spaces between the planking, so that air can circulate and, I suppose, keep the cork from rotting. There was no time to get these lockers open in the proper way, and Mr. Barnes tore at them with the strength of a giant, wrenching the planks away, and getting out the lifebelts. One he fastened round me, another round my sister—all the time showing such confidence in our salvation that the veriest coward would have been fortified by his example. His wife was so wonderful, too, and it is dreadful, even now, after the lapse of years, to know that he was numbered with the lost.

All this time Captain Reeks and his officers had been doing everything in their power to save the lives of those on board—they must have known at once that there was no hope for the *Stella*, even if they did not expect her to sink so soon. There were many cries and orders—but one cry rose above all the rest: "Women and children first!"

Obedient to the hoarse commands, my sister and I hurried to a little boat that was being lowered from the *Stella*, which was even now leaning over so much that her deck looked like a sloping roof. She herself was settling swiftly in the water.

There were five ordinary boats and two collapsible boats—the Berthon canvas structures, which are carried folded up on deck, and must be opened out before they can be used. Theresa and myself were ordered to get into one of the boats which was being lowered. I looked at it, and saw that it already appeared to be overcrowded with the rush of people. I glanced across the deck, and saw another boat which was not so full.

"Theresa," I cried, "let us try and get into that."

We hastened to it and struggled in—how I cannot tell you, any more than I can describe the way of getting afloat. All I know is that we reached the water, that just as we frantically pulled clear of the *Stella* she disappeared with a terrible noise, and I know, too, that the boat to which we had been ordered capsized as soon as she was lowered, and that every soul in her was drowned. Such are the tragic chances of the sea!

The very suddenness and magnitude of the disaster prevented us from being overwhelmed with terror. We had no time to think, no chance of comprehending the extent of the catastrophe.

Seven short minutes only had passed since

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we were lying in our cosy stateroom in a strong and beautiful steamer—and now she had vanished, and we were tossing wildly on the seething waters which had just engulfed her.

When we had somewhat overcome our horror and recovered our steadiness a little, when we realised that we had, at any rate, escaped the greatest danger—the suction of the disappearing vessel, and that we were afloat and with a chance of ultimate salvation, we had time to look about us and get some idea of the terrible havoc which had been done in one brief moment. The air was burdened with the most dreadful sounds——the cries of the drowning and despairing, and the infinitely worse appeals of those who begged to be taken into boats that were already overladen and threatened destruction to their occupants.

How can I tell you of the things I saw? Yet I will brace myself to do so, for I believe that in such recitals may be found an incentive to responsible authorities to do everything that lies within the power of human skill and worldly riches to accomplish. Surely it is possible for these agencies, with such inventions as submarine signalling and wireless telegraphy, to obviate these perils of the deep—if you can but assure the exercise at all times of prudence as well as courage.

For some few minutes there was danger that we should be drawn into that seething vortex; then a greater fear that the people who were struggling in the sea would prove our own destruction while they themselves perished. They fought despairingly to get into our little craft; clinging to the gunwale and clutching wildly at those of us whom they could reach. One of the men in our boat beat them off with his oar, and they fell back into the water and took their chance again. Thank God, in some cases, at any rate, they were saved.

It was terrible that a thing like this should be done—a thing which seems so selfish, and which, I suppose, arises from the wish for life overpowering all humanity in certain people.

But there was a brighter side to that dark picture, and that was afforded by many instances of the most glorious courage and self-sacrifice even as the *Stella* disappeared. Never was there put on record a nobler deed than that of Mrs. Rogers, the stewardess. She was urged to save herself in the only way available—by getting into one of the boats.

"No," she answered firmly, "they are too full already. There is no room for me."

They told her that it was her only chance, and that she must take it.

"No," she persisted, firmly still—she would not save her own life at the probable cost of a fellow-creature's.

She waved us farewell as we drew off in the boat, bidding us be of good cheer; then she raised her clasped hands towards the heavens, and with her last prayer of "Lord, have me!" she went down with the *Stella*—surely one of the noblest women who ever gave their lives for others.

And I think, too, that death must have come quickly to those who even to the last were not expecting it. The *Stella* went so quickly, leaning over and over gradually until she vanished all at once, that there was no time for people to realise what was happening. How also can you explain that even when she had struck the rock one lady was collecting her luggage, and a little boy was getting together the toys with which he had been playing? Both perished.

There was wild confusion in our little boat. Into a space that was meant for fifteen persons, twenty-three were crowded—eighteen men and five women, some of us thickly clothed and wearing cumbersome life-jackets. To add to our danger in that pitiless swirl, only two or three of the men could handle an oar, and many strange things were done because of this.

There was one extraordinary spectacle which I noticed when we had just got away from the wreck. There were struggling people all about us, mostly in the water; but a few appeared to be standing on some kind of support, and some were clinging to the sides of it. The support seemed something like a raft, but I knew it could not be that; nor did I imagine that it was a rock which was level with the water. Not until afterwards did I learn the truth, then I found that the strange object was a great furniture van which was on board the *Stella*, being conveyed to Guernsey. When the ship foundered the van slid off into the sea and remained floating for some time; but not long enough to enable the survivors to be rescued, even if they had been able to withstand the bitter coldness of the water and exposure to the weather.

One or two other boats were near us, and during the fifteen unspeakable hours we were on the water, one, with thirty-three survivors in her, kept very close to us. We looked wildly about us in every direction for a sign of help, but the fog was so dense that we could only see a little way. Then darkness came to add

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She waved us farewell as we drew off in the boat, bidding us be of good cheer.

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to our miseries, and we resigned ourselves as best we could to the long, dreary night and its solemn thoughts. The other boat's companionship was a mutual comfort and relief. We rowed and baled as best we could, and the human ramparts round the gunwales served as barriers to the breaking seas. Somebody suggested that we should anchor, and the anchors were thrown overboard—though how they expected to get holding-ground in such deep, swirling waters, with a rocky bottom, I do not understand.

Now came one of those incidents which no one can foresee. That was my singing in the boat to try to comfort my companions. I cannot bear to dwell upon it, or to recall what happened; but since you say that other people wish to hear the story I will tell it to you; and I am perhaps the less unwilling because so many versions have been given which are wrong. It has been said, for instance, that I sang "I know that my Redeemer liveth," which I could not do if I practised for ever, because I am a contralto. In my hearing, too, a lady has said: "I would have liked to box that girl's ears!"—being under the impression, apparently, that I sang something from a musical comedy or light opera!

Darkness had completely fallen on the Channel—darkness so intense that we could scarcely see each other, even huddled as we were in that small ship's boat. Five hours had passed since the *Stella* foundered, and we knew that there was no hope of being seen until day had broken. Hungry and thirsty, numb with cold and wet, heavy-spirited because of the terrible scenes we had witnessed, unnerved by those last despairing cries for help which still rang in our ears, a universal melancholy overwhelmed us.

I heard a low voice in the darkness near me—a voice which uttered broken words which were not audible, but could only mean one thing—prayer. I found that a young man was praying, seeking courage and comfort from that source from which alone at such a time consolation can come. I thought how beautiful it was of him to do it, and how encouraging to the survivors. I knew, however, that his words could not be heard by all of us, and then the thought occurred to me that what he failed to do with speech alone, I could achieve with singing.

I turned to where my sister was sitting in the boat, happily better off than some of us, for she, at any rate, was dry and fairly warm.

"Theresa," I said, "would you like me to sing?"

"Oh, yes, Greta," she answered, "I would indeed, very much. But do you think you can?"

"Yes," I told her, "I think so; at any rate I can try." Even then I took a little comfort from the thought that I had at least an indulgent and not critical audience.

I wondered what I should sing, and the utter sadness of our case decided me. Not long before I had lost a dear relative to whom, on her dying bed and at her wish, I had often sung her favourite words and music. I sang them now:

O Rest in the Lord,
Wait patiently for Him.

But it was not a steady voice that rose in the darkness on that lonely sea; they were troubled and imploring tones which came from the very depth of my heart, and while they comforted my hearers, they expressed the hope which filled me with assurance of delivery when the daylight came.

Yes, there were many broken sobs when I had finished; but there was not, I think, any survivor in the boat who did not feel the braver after hearing those beautiful words of consolation, and the assurance that patience would be crowned with the attainment of our hearts' desire.

Wait patiently—and heart's desire! I wonder if you can take your mind to that frail boat, lonely on that sad sea, and understand what it meant to wait, and how every heart desired salvation from our fellow men!

I cannot tell you, and I do not think any survivor can describe, how we got through those long hours of darkness. I have told you that when the day was over we anchored, as we supposed; but we found that all the time we had been drifting, and that at last we were close upon the dreaded rocks. Little, indeed, was necessary to destroy our overladen craft—a mere touch against the rocks, and she would have capsized, or been so badly damaged that she would have foundered.

Suddenly the cry was raised that we were on the rocks, and the startled shout went up: "Row for your lives!" They did row, too, as furiously as they could, and they managed to get the boat clear of this great danger—a peril which was the greater because of the inexperience of the men amongst us.

We had been in the boat for some time, drifting aimlessly about, going mostly where the currents took us, when, overpowered with the horrors of our case and thirst and hunger, a lady near me fainted. She collapsed altogether, and there was danger of grave consequences. There were none of the usual

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It was not a steady voice that rose in the darkness on that lonely sea.

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remedies available; it was impossible to give her breathing-room or to get at her clothing to release the pressure of it upon her. Yet we made shift to huddle a bit closer, so that I could try to do something. I made an effort, and never, I think, was harder task of this sort undertaken. My fingers were numb with cold; I was weak and exhausted myself, and all the time the boat was in violent commotion, so that it was difficult to keep one position for more than a few seconds. And there was such an amazing quantity of clothing! It seemed as if the unbuttonings at the throat would never end. First there was a fur, then a sealskin jacket, then layers of garments which appeared to be endless. But these very layers, I have no doubt, made all the difference between life and death, because they kept the lady warm and dry, and when she had recovered from her swoon enabled her to keep up until the time of rescue came.

At last the day broke, and we, who had more than once seen lights of passing ships, discovered a steamer approaching. She came on and on, but seemed likely to pass without observing us. We saw her clearly enough, because she was so big on the water, and because we were so small we remained unnoticed. That was the most terrible part of our experience, and the most dangerous, for the men kept standing up in the boat, frantically waving their oars to gain attention, and those who had not oars were waving hats. Even now, when help was near and seemed so sure, we were in danger of turning over through excitement.

It was nearly eight o'clock, and the steamer came on. Suddenly we knew that she had seen us, and she bore down towards us to pick us up, not knowing that we were the *Stella's* survivors, any more than we knew that this was the *Vera*, belonging to the same company, and following the *Stella* in the night service.

We got alongside—how I cannot tell you; and as we rose on the waves we were seized by our outstretched hands and lifted on board.

So terrible was the effect of the disaster, that it seemed as if no one could help us. All on board the *Vera* were stunned and overwhelmed, and the survivors were left on deck just where they happened to find themselves. No attempt was made by the crew to help us or attend to us—we were saved, and that was all. As soon as I was on board, however, a passenger came up and said: "May I relieve you of that belt?"

"Oh, yes, please," I answered, and with that he took off the cumbersome life-jacket which I had worn for fifteen hours. I instantly ran below into the ladies' cabin and found that everybody was lying down, too seasick to take any notice of either me or anybody else.

As soon as we were in the *Vera* I saw a friend of mine, but he did not make any sign of knowing me. I wondered why this should be so until I saw my face, then I understood, for with the smoke from the *Stella* and the privations in the boat, I was so black that I was unrecognisable. It was days before I removed these traces of the disaster. This friend saw me and my sister safe to our hotel, where I went to bed, so exhausted that I slept peacefully and forgot all about the peril through which we had safely passed. But the terror of it came back afterwards, intensified indeed.

As I tell the story now I feel all the horrors of the wreck afresh. I have suffered infinitely more since the disaster than I did at the time, because my mother is Danish, and we were always taught not to be afraid of the sea. I was not afraid during the whole of the time we were on the water, nor did I suffer from sickness as so many did, because I am a good sailer, so I was spared many of the miseries which afflicted my companions.

One curious change has come about since that fatal night. Before I was wrecked I was nervous when I appeared in public to sing; but now I know that every soul in every audience is my friend. Is not that a wondrous tribute to the power of music? for it is through one of the grandest sacred songs that all these people everywhere are friends.

I see that you are looking at the brooch I am wearing. You are curious to know what it is, and would like to see it? You are puzzled to understand it? Well, many people are—even musicians. Yet it is made of five notes of music, each note a diamond, given to me in remembrance of that unrehearsed performance in the boat.

Yes, you have guessed aright, they are the notes of "O Rest in the Lord."

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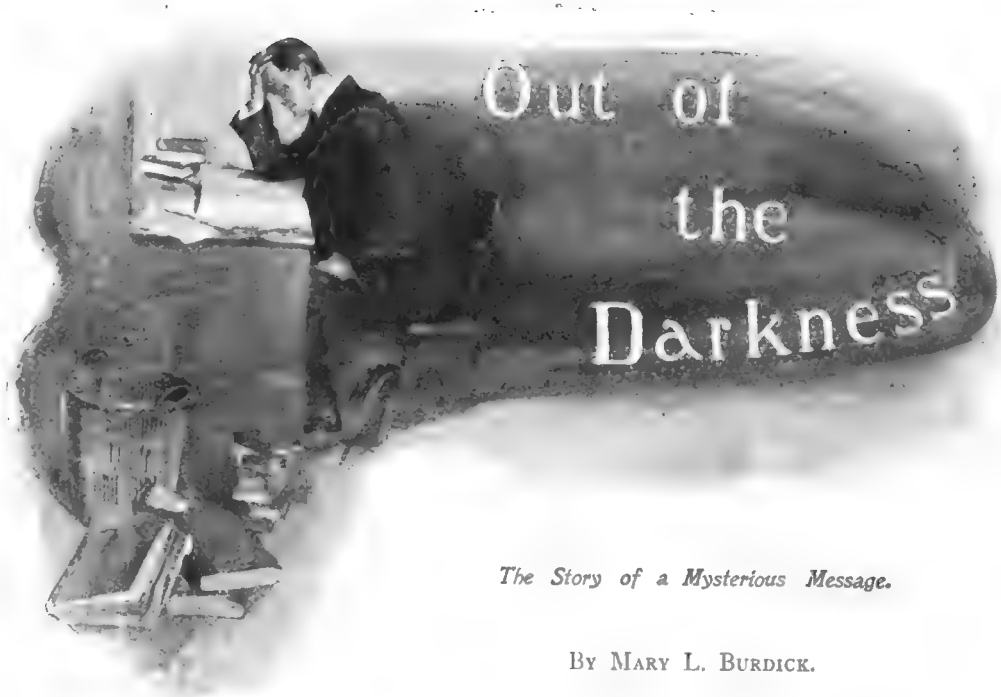

The Story of a Mysterious Message.

By Mary L. Burdick.

It was the privilege of every member of the Once Upon a Time Club to invite a guest to the quarterly banquet. And each guest was obliged to contribute a story for the entertainment of the club. So we were not surprised when our president announced that his friend Mr. Owen, of New York, would tell us of a strange experience.

Naturally our glances were directed towards Mr. Owen, and he, in turn, regarded us intently with an expression which seemed at once analytic and retrospective.

"I will commence," he said, "by expressing the hope that I am treading upon no one's sympathies when I say that I have never been a believer in the occult. No spiritual *séance* has ever been attractive to me, nor have I ever found manna in the prediction of the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter. Yet I have seen one manifestation, if I may so call it, which was extraordinary, and which has never been explained fully.

"To have you understand the circumstances, I must tell you a little of my personal history. My parents died in my early childhood, leaving a considerable estate, which increased under the judicious management of a careful guardian.

"I was educated at Harvard, and after graduating there entered upon the practice of law in New York. Fortune smiled upon me in all respects save one. There was ever with me an underlying sense of loneliness, a terrible feeling, and one common to every person who has never known a home or kindred.

"As the years went by my natural reserve decreased. I mingled more in society, and became an occasional visitor in many households, in one of which I found true companionship.

"Robert Marchmont had been my classmate at college, and he and his wife (one of the rare women who make their husbands' friends their own) always offered a gracious and liberal hospitality. Their beautiful home on the Hudson became an elysium to me, especially after one holiday in which I met Miss Margaret Way.

"Her tastes and mine were most congenial, and our pleasant acquaintance grew into a warm friendship, which steadily strengthened. To the delight of our entertainers we became engaged, and our wedding was fixed for October.

"In June, Margaret came to me with a serious face. Her mother was in failing health, and the doctors agreed that a sea voyage was desirable. They also recommended a stay at some foreign springs.

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"There was nothing to do but to accept the situation. Margaret was the only child of her widowed mother, and must accompany her. However, they would return in the autumn, and our marriage would immediately follow.

"So we said good-bye to each other and separated, Margaret sailing over the water, and I returned to my office to endure what I had intended should be the happiest summer of my life.

"I think it is Legouave who said: 'God condemned man to live, and gave him work as a mitigating circumstance.' In the months which followed I learnt the infinite wisdom and mercy of work. I undertook the entire management of several intricate cases, and so contrived to keep in abeyance the old-time desolation.

"Letters brightened my existence. The weeks passed by and the return passages were taken. At last it was time for the *Princess* to arrive in the harbour. So certain was I of the day that I ordered quantities of Margaret's favourite flowers, and awaited in my office the formal notification.

"The beautiful morning turned to afternoon, and the afternoon grew grey, but no vessel appeared.

"'I think we will have to try again to-morrow, old man," said Mr. Marchmont, who had called to get the latest intelligence. 'Better luck then.'

"I endeavoured to assent cheerfully. But my heart sank, and I let the violets lie uncared for on my desk. They were like my hopes, I thought, withered.

"The morrow came, but not the boat. Another day and another dragged along. Then Robert Marchmont put his arm round me.

"'Come home with me, Jack,' he said. 'You'll not be fit to have Margaret see you if you look like this.'

"Dully I consented. For fourteen days our suspense was prolonged. Then, one morning, entering the library, I saw Mrs. Marchmont conceal a newspaper, which she hastily snatched from her husband.

"I felt certain of the worst, but an awful calm came over me.

"'Is the *Princess* lost?' I asked.

"'The company is not positive, Jack, not positive.'

"'But it admits great anxiety?'

"'Yes.'

"'Robert, what do you believe?'

"He looked at me with sorrow and a pity almost divine. 'The boat is seventeen days overdue now. I fear she may never make port.'

"The week following was almost a blank to me.

"I knew that Robert seemed always present, and that old Doctor McPherson came in frequently. I believe that when I was spoken to I answered rationally. But my brain seemed on fire.

"One night I heard the doctor's voice in the hall:

"'Women have one great advantage over men, Mrs. Marchmont. That is, the relief of tears. If we could give our friend that assistance——'

"Then the outer door closed behind them.

"When Mrs. Marchmont entered the room again she came directly to me, and took my burning hands in hers.

"'Jack,' she said gently, 'last summer when life was so bright for us all, Robert and I chose a gift for your next birthday. Everything is changed now, yet we would like you to see our offering. Come with us, please.'

"I wondered vaguely why she talked of a birthday and a gift, but I was aroused by her quiet dominance, and followed her. Mr. Marchmont accompanied us, and, by his wife's suggestion, carried a lamp.

"We went up two flights of stairs, and through a long passage into a room which I never before entered.

"Within I saw but one object—a portrait.

"It was a life-size likeness of Margaret, and so perfect that it seemed as if she stood before me.

"Infinitely lovely it was; and, as I gazed, the band around my heart loosened, and tears ran down my face. But through them I could see her countenance, smiling and wistfully tender.

"For a long time no one spoke. Then Mrs. Marchmont said:

"'You find it as we did, very like her, But we want more light; that drapery which hides the back wall absorbs it. Will you draw the curtain aside, Robert?'

"He did so, and the next instant a wave of cold air rushed in, extinguishing the lamp. We heard a moaning sound, and then (gentlemen, I swear it!) we saw on the opposite wall of the room a large, luminous star. Below it was written in clear, silvery letters:

Do not be discouraged,
The *Princess* is safe.

"Like some beautiful illumination glowed

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star and words, seeming to gain in brilliancy.

"'It's a message from the other world,' cried Mrs. Marchmont. 'Margaret will return! I know she will return!'

"'Matches!' said her husband. 'Jack, give me some matches.'

"He took them, and hurried from the room. At the door he turned to his wife.

"'You are not afraid to stay—but of course you are not.'

"'I should be afraid to leave,' she answered.

"He understood it in the sense she had meant it, and disappeared. In silence Mrs. Marchmont and I continued to watch the strange spectacle.

"Possibly fifteen minutes passed before Mr. Marchmont returned. His first thought was of the star.

"'Is it as vivid?" he asked.

"It was not. Its lustre gradually lessened until it vanished. A moment or two more, and the message also had gone.

"Mr. Marchmont lighted the lamp, and the portrait was again visible. Was it altered, or did I imagine that the face had a different expression—one of joy?

"I do not know. I remember that an irresistible feeling came over me, and I walked towards the picture, saying:

"'Yes, Margaret, I understand; you are safe!"

"Then the floor slipped away from my feet, and I lost consciousness entirely.

"When I came to myself it was morning. The soft October sunshine filtered through the blinds, and the Sabbath bells rang sweetly. Dr. McPherson sat near the foot of my bed with a book in his hand. But he was not reading.

"He must have realised instantly that I was in full possession of my mental faculties, for he moved his chair nearer and looked at me with a note of interrogation in his dark eyes.

"'I remember everything,' I said, 'and I would like to talk to you.'

"'And I to you,' he returned. 'Also, I

We saw on the opposite wall of the room a large, luminous star.

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have two papers to show you. This first,' and he held out a folded, yellow slip.

"I read it with difficulty. It merely said:

"'*Princess* just arrived. Miss Way and mother well. With you by next train. Kent.'

"'She will be here in about ten minutes,' continued the doctor. 'You shall see her at once. In the meantime I must ask you to lie perfectly still. I will tell you a short story which may interest you.

"'You have probably noticed Mrs. Marchmont's maid, Hester. She is going to be a teacher, and is much interested in chemical experiments. Unknown to Mrs. Marchmont she has been using the back room on the third storey as her laboratory. She was at work there last evening, when your party made an unexpected call. She was frightened, so fled precipitately and hid in a chest so small that Mr. Marchmont did not open it when he searched the house.'

"'How does he know, then, that she was there?'

"'She confessed this morning, when he questioned the servants.'

"'And you mean that Hester made the star and the words appear?'

"'Yes; but not from malice, nor with any intention of deception. She chanced on them. The star was drawn from memory of a geometrical exercise, and the words she chose from a printed circular in which her brushes were wrapped. Here it is—the other paper which I wished you to see!'

"'It was an advertisement of a new baking-powder! And three sentences were sufficient to enlighten me greatly:

"HOUSEKEEPERS, HAS YOUR BREAD EVER BEEN RUINED BY DELETERIOUS BAKING-POWDERS?

"DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED,

"THE *Princess* IS SAFE.

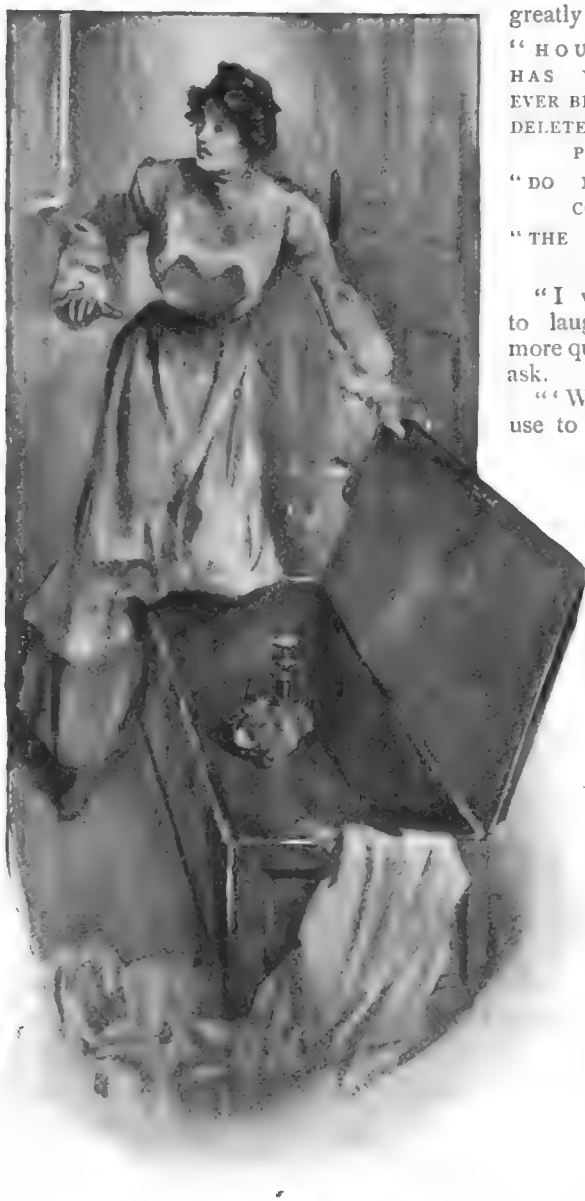
"I was too weak to laugh; but one more question I would ask.

"'What did she use to get that look of moonshine?'

"'Well,' responded the doctor thoughtfully, 'there is a solution of chloroform and phosphorous which—but I think you will find Nature more interesting than science. Come in Miss Way.'

"And as Margaret entered by one door, he left by another.

"Clever fellow, wasn't he? I meant to speak to him about the chemicals. I never did, however, and that's why the manifestation was not thoroughly explained."



She was frightened, so fled precipitately and hid in a chest.

We all agreed that Mr. Owen's story was one of the strangest we had ever heard.

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Photo *Lizzie Caswall Smith.*

"I wore a ballet skirt, which was rather awkward."

Confessions Of Little Celebrities

No. I.—MISS IRIS HAWKINS.

The Cleverest Little Girl Performer now Appearing on the British Stage.

When my mother wrote little fairy plays for children, and I acted in them, I never imagined that the time would come when I should play on a real stage to real people; still less that I should ever be visited by a real interviewer.

Those little plays of my mother's were delightful. I remember that one of them was called *Cicely's Secret*, and another was *The Fairy's Nosegay*. I felt very important indeed on those occasions; but I had actually appeared in public several years before—when I was three years old, in fact. This was at the Victoria Hall, Bayswater, where I took the part of the guiding star in *The Land of Long Ago*, and afterwards I played the "Shamrock Fairy." I seem always to have had a great deal to do with fairies—on the stage. I wonder if all great actresses have begun by being fairies; I hope so, for I want to be a very great actress some day.

When did I first appear in a theatre? I think it is horrid of you to ask that question, for I feel quite ashamed when I think of it. Fancy, I had to get a license, just like a dog! You see, when I first went on the stage I was only seven years old, so I suppose it was necessary; all the same it wasn't very nice. This first real public appearance of mine was at the Garrick Theatre in *The Cricket on the Hearth*. No, indeed, it was not a dumb part that I played: it was a real speaking part. I had two whole lines all to myself, just like a real, grown-up actress.

My next engagement was also at the Garrick, in *The Fairy's Dilemma*—fairies again, you see! Here I performed two solo dances, and wore a ballet skirt, which was rather awkward, for in one of the dances—a skipping rope dance—the rope kept catching my skirt. However, I got several encores, and was, of course, very proud and happy. Was I nervous? Not a bit, only very tired and, oh, so hot! Perhaps I had better say now that I am never nervous; I suppose I am too young. Besides, everyone is so kind to me on the stage. I always feel quite at home there now.

My next part was simply lovely. I played "Barbara" in the children's Christmas play, *Black Sambo and Little White Barbara*. Do you remember that little bit of business where Barbara dodges taking cod-liver oil? I *did* enjoy that, especially when I deftly slipped the horrid stuff into my aunt's tea! I hate cod-liver oil, and if I have to take it I always try to give it to the cat instead. It is just as good for cats as for girls, and I'm sure they don't find it half as nasty.

Oh! I must show you my letter from Miss Ellen Terry, or rather, I must read it to you, though of course I know it all by heart, and I have read it quite a hundred times. Here it is:

20th June.
215 King's Road, Chelsea.

My Dear Little Girl,

Please will your mother and you accept my best thanks for kindly consenting to help the Shakespeare Society on July 6th?

Yours affectionately,
Ellen Terry,

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Don't you think it a sweet letter? I must tell you that I did a dance on that occasion, and I also recited Titania's speech from the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. I love Shakespeare better than anything else. I have a bound volume of his works of my own, and I would not part with it for worlds. I often spend a whole afternoon with it, curled up in a big arm-chair. As for Miss Terry, I think she is the greatest actress in the world, and she has been *so* kind to me.

Photo *W. & D. Downey.*
"Viva—she's my sister, you know . . . I've got the bow in my hair."

What was my next part? Well, after playing "Barbara" I became a boy for some time. That was in *Everybody's Secret*, where I took the part of "Micky," the little boy, you know, who caused all the trouble. I liked to play "Micky" because Mr. Cyril Maude was so nice. He was supposed to be awfully stern, but he wasn't a bit. It was great fun playing trains and running over the dolls.

Which do I like best—boys' parts or girls'? Well, on the whole, girls', because I like girls' clothes best. All the same, "Micky" was a very nice part, and I was sorry when *Everybody's Secret* was so well known that it had to be taken off.

My next part was "Derek Jesson" in *His House in Order*, and I must tell you one thing about the play. Before it was produced Mr. Pinero sent me the book of the play, and told me that I was on no account to let anyone see it. I didn't, of course, for I can keep a secret quite as well as a man, and a good deal better than some grown-up actresses!

Yes, I like holidays, and always manage to enjoy them when they come; but you must not take too many holidays if you want to become a great actress. I think the best holiday I ever had was one I spent in Ireland. I went to Dublin and Cork, and had a splendid time. I like the Irish brogue so much. Still, I don't mean to spend too much time in holiday-making. You see, though I am only a little girl, I know quite well that I cannot get on unless I work very hard. Many famous actors and actresses have told me that I have started very well, and they all say that I shall get on *if I work hard*. That's why I always try and do my lessons well.

I like lessons; not all of them, but most. I am fond of arithmetic, and French I think is lovely, but I am sorry to say I can't bear grammar. I think it's horrid. Of course, I am fond of dancing, but I don't think you ought to count it amongst the lessons. To me it is one of the greatest pleasures I have, and

"I like lessons; not all of them, but most."

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I can never have too much of it, though it makes me very tired sometimes.

I am very fond of games, and my favourite amusement is swimming, and next to that fishing, especially sea-fishing. I think fishing is great fun, and once I had an adventure. I was fishing at Maidenhead, and my line got entangled in a weeping-willow. I tried and tried, but could not get it free. All of a sudden I fell plump into the river. I say I *fell* into the river, but I may as well tell you the truth. I only half fell! I half did it because I badly wanted a swim! You see, you're not allowed to bathe at Maidenhead after seven o'clock, and I'm *so* fond of swimming. Do you know, if a horrid interviewer had not come this afternoon I should have had a swim to-day. Please don't think I'm rude to say that.

Photo Lizzie Caswall Smith.

"I was the naughty girl after whom we named the play."

Do you think people would really like to know whether I am fond of animals? Well, I love all of them, the ordinary kind, of course. I would like to have a dog, but I think it's a shame to keep dogs in a flat in London. They always seem so unhappy unless they can run about in a garden. That's why I have no pets just now, but I am going to have one soon, for somebody—I mustn't say who—has promised to give me a bullfinch. I love birds, and when I get him I shall not forget to feed him in the morning, give him his bath, and put him to bed before I go to the theatre in the evening.

Speaking of presents reminds me that I have had some lovely ones given to me. One of the best I got from Mr. W. S. Gilbert, and what do you think it was? A beautiful gold chain necklace, with four sixpences in it, and on each sixpence the words: "'Iris,' from W. S. Gilbert, *The Fairy's Dilemma.*" Wasn't it nice of him to give me such a lovely present? I think a great deal of it, as in fact I do of all the gifts that I have had at different times.

Then there's the bracelet which I got from Mr. George Alexander as a souvenir of the hundredth performance of *His House in Order*. Oh! and that reminds me how it was that Mr. Alexander came to give me a present at all. Well, in honour of the one-hundredth performance he gave a very fine supper to the actors and actresses who had played throughout its run. Now, I, being so very young, could not stay for the supper, and—and, well, it is a lovely bracelet, isn't it?

I don't think I have much more to tell you—at least, what I could say would not be very interesting. Perhaps, however, you would like to know that I still take part at home in home-made plays. Last year we made up a lovely one; that is, a friend and I made it up between us. We called it *A Trying Pupil*, and *I* was the naughty girl after whom we named the play. Viva—she's my sister, you know—took the part of a servant, and my friend was the governess. Here is a photo of Viva and me; I've got the bow in my hair. It went off very well.

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Clinton's Castle

How a Small Boy Brought Two Lovers Together.

By E. Burrowes.

The rage for sand-castles was at its height, and Pat Clinton was one of the most eager competitors for a prize, which floated before him in his waking hours and in his dreams, taking the varied shapes of a pony and cart, an engine which would emit real steam, or a set of really *sharp* carpentering tools.

Under the glaring sun which beat down most pitilessly on the golden sands and smooth, blue sea, the child laboured doggedly, altering and renovating his castle as the fancy seized him; and, lying on his back under the lee of a sheltering sandhill, his panama hat tilted over his eyes, Pat's uncle, Humphrey Clinton, V.C., and several other letters, watched the progress of the building of that sand-castle with lazy interest.

"Rum little beggar," he muttered to himself, as he watched Pat's sturdy figure and admired his untiring energy; "wonder he doesn't get sunstroke."

A shady corner and a novel were more in his line, he reflected, though he was always ready to lend a helping hand to Pat when he was wanted; but on this occasion his offer of assistance had been refused with scorn. This castle, the best and final effort, was to be Pat's own, unaided work. And its smooth sand walls grew, and a tower or two appeared, with battlements, and a moat incircled it, into which Pat patiently poured pail after pail full of water, only to see it sink rapidly out of sight.

The warmth was very soothing, as was also the murmur of the incoming tide, and Humphrey Clinton was nearly asleep, when a delighted little cry awoke him. He half sat up, to see Pat standing before his castle, looking it over with the happy eyes of a successful artist.

"It's quite done!" he announced.

"Done, is it? That's splendid, Pat. I say, it does look topping!"

Before Pat's blue eyes there swam an enchanting vision of a prize—whether pony, engine, or carpentering tools he didn't much mind, for he wanted them all *so* much!—and he heaved a big sigh, and then rubbed his very sandy little hand over his hot face.

"And I'm *drefully* hot," he said.

"I should think so. Come and sit down here in the shade for a minute, old man—you'll be getting fever or something if you get into such a state, and then mummie will be down on me like a hundred of bricks."

Pat flung himself down beside the uncle he adored.

"I'll make a long avenue," he said presently, "where the prince can come riding up to the castle. There's a lovely lady shut up there, Uncle Humphie, an' a nasty old dragon what's keeping her away from the prince."

"I say, that sounds exciting! What is the prince going to do, Pat? Kill the dragon, eh?"

"Yes, an' take away the pretty princess, an' then they'll live happy ever after—like they do in the fairy tales."

"It's only in fairy tales they do that nowadays," said Clinton gloomily, and the smile was wiped from his face by his own words—only in fairy tales!

The thud of a horse's feet coming momentarily nearer startled him out of his dreams, and it did not need a cry from Pat to send him to his feet in alarm for the child's safety. But the flying horse, galloping along the firm sand, ridden by a girl whose fair hair was ruffled by the wind, and whose face glowed like the heart of a rose, swerved aside as it passed them, and—leaving them in safety—

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trampled on the sand-castle, scattering its smooth walls, its proud, battlemented towers, and many intrenchments, leveling it to the sandy surface. Then—the horse and rider vanished, and Pat Clinton was left to lament over the ruins of his proud building.

"It's *all* gone!" he said, his voice a little shaky. He was a gallant little figure in his white sailor suit, and his face had grown redder still with the effort to keep back the tears of anger and disappointment which were perilously near the surface. The vision of the prize faded away in the remotest distance; he would never be able to build up such a fine castle again; it had been an inspiration, and those things don't often come twice.

"It's too bad," said Clinton in a would-be comforting tone, and Pat, looking up at him, wondered why his face had grown so oddly white, and his lips had set in such a stern line. "But you're not the only person whose castles have been knocked down like that by Marcia."

His voice was full of bitterness.

"Did you *know* that nasty lady on the horse?" demanded Pat, who went at once to the root of things.

"Yes—I did once, Pat."

"And did she ever knock over castles before?"

Clinton nodded.

"She knocked mine down so that it couldn't be built up again," he said grimly, "but—one gets over even that in time, old man. As to *your* castle—well, you can build again, can't you?"

"It won't be the same," said Pat mournfully.

"No, it's never the same," murmured Clinton to himself, and looked away along the golden sands; in the distance, against the blue line of advancing sea he could distinguish that light, flying figure. He wondered if she had recognised him—but it was hardly likely, and if she had not—it was just as well. He fell to with a will to the building of another castle—but Pat was quite right. It was not a bit the same as the other—nor as good.

* * * * *

The little river—no higher than to a man's knees—ran very pleasantly past the garden, and, dangling a tempting bait at the end of a fishing line, Pat was enjoying himself thoroughly. His uncle—whom he desired to emulate in all things—was an enthusiastic fisherman, and he had given Pat a nice little rod, and a few hints in the gentle art of angling. The child was now flogging the ridiculous little river with zeal. He had the

It was the work of a minute only to seize Pat and lift him out of the river.

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place to himself for the time being. Clinton having gone back to the house to write letters, and the amusement of trying to catch one of those little fish that whisked in and out of the pools and gurgling rapids was most enthralling.

Pat had got over the destruction of his sand-castle, but he had neither forgotten nor forgiven the author of that disaster. It was not so much on account of his own castle that he disliked the very thought of that pretty girl with the fluffy hair and rose-pink cheeks, but it was because she had once pulled down his uncle's castle—he supposed it must have been a sand one, too—and anyone who did any harm to Humphrey Clinton made Pat his or her enemy for life.

A stepping-stone in mid-stream tempted Pat sorely. It would be so delightful to fish from that spot, where one could cast the bait into a little, silent pool on the other side of the stream. It was quite easy to jump on to it surely, and, without more ado, Pat jumped. It was further than he thought, and he landed into the stream instead of on to the stone; his foot twisted and slipped on a treacherous, weed-grown, little boulder, and the next minute he was floundering most ignominiously in the middle of the river, with his rod broken beneath him, and his line and bait gone!

Someone heard his gasping cry, and flew to the rescue.

It was the merest chance that had sent Marcia Trent along the other bank of the tiny river, armed with a book, a parasol, and a basket, which she had filled with forget-me-nots and purple flags. It was the work of a minute only to seize Pat and lift him out of the river. His foot was too painful to stand upon, as he speedily told her.

"Why, you poor little man—that *was* a nasty fall," she said, "and you've broken the rod! That's really too bad. Let me see now, you live on the other side? Then I must carry you round by the little bridge. We don't want to risk any more tumbles into the water, do we? Do you know—yes, you *are* the little boy whose sand-castle I spoilt the other day, aren't you?"

Pat stared at her solemnly. His face clouded.

"Yes. You knocked it all down!"

"I was so sorry. I went back to tell you so, but you had gone. And Firefly, my horse, was so frisky that morning I could hardly hold him in at all. You must forgive me for hurting that lovely castle."

"But you were very bad to knock down Uncle Humphie's too," said Pat severely.

Miss Trent looked puzzled.

"Were there two?" she asked. "I only saw one."

"Not there," corrected Pat; "but some other time. He told me you'd knocked it all down, and he could *never* build it up again!"

Miss Trent's pretty cheeks lost their lovely colour.

"*Who* is your uncle?" she asked quite suddenly.

"His name is Humphrey Clinton, an' he's a V.C., and all sorts of brave things, and——"

"*Humphrey Clinton!*"

The name broke from the girl like a cry.

"But——" she stopped abruptly, and put her arm round the sturdy though dripping little figure in the sailor suit.

"I must not keep you here; you'll catch cold," she said softly, and Pat thought her eyes looked as if they were full of tears. "Let me take you back over the little bridge. Why, I can carry you quite well. Hold tight round my neck. That's it!"

Pat clung tightly to his new-found friend. He admired, now that he could see them so close, her pretty blue eyes, her pink cheeks, and her fluffy hair. Her arms were so warm and strong, too, and she carried him so comfortably, stepping over the little bridge into his own garden. He almost forgot his poor, aching foot which he had twisted so badly. She had not meant to spoil his sand-castle, and she had said she was sorry, so that perhaps she felt the same about Uncle Humphie's. He must ask him to forgive her.

"You didn't *mean* to do it, did you?" he said beguilingly.

"Do what?"

"Knock down Uncle Humphie's castle."

He felt the girl quiver.

"No—I *never* meant," she said softly. "I think if he knew——"

She stopped short, as through the trees Humphrey Clinton appeared, coming swiftly towards them. Before he could reach them Pat had broken into a voluble explanation of the situation in his childish treble.

"An'," he finished breathlessly, his chubby arm still round the neck of his new ally, "she never meant to knock down your castle—or mine. An' she says she's sorry, an'——"

"Pat! Don't you think you're too heavy for Miss Trent?"

Clinton's voice was very polite—but as cold as ice. He had only bowed to the girl

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who was standing before him, and had scarcely glanced at her a second time.

"An' won't you forgive her, Uncle Humphie?"

There was a moment's dead silence. Then Clinton stepped forward and took the child out of Marcia Trent's arms.

"He is *much* too heavy for you," he said, and the iciness melted from his voice and eyes. "You deserve to be scolded, Pat, but ——"

Pat pressed an insinuating cheek against Clinton's bronzed one.

"Don't be angwy," he coaxed, "an' couldn't you forgive *her*, too? She'll *never* knock your castle down again, will you?"

He looked at Miss Trent.

"Oh! — *never*," she said very low.

Then she looked up and found Clinton's eyes fixed on her, with a look in their depths that had not visited them since they had parted in anger and sorrow more than a year ago.

"*Marcia!*" he said. It must have spoken volumes, that one word, for all doubts and sorrows cleared away from both their hearts as a cloud breaks before the warmth of the sun. Pat had not played peacemaker for nothing!

And then they all went back to the house together—Pat on his uncle's shoulder, and Marcia Trent with one hand slipped through Clinton's arm, and the other holding tight to Pat's disengaged hand.

* * * * *

Pat got his prize after all. It took the double form of an engine that smoked real steam from a lovely red funnel, and a pony to ride. He thinks himself too old to build sand-castles any more now, and some day, his uncle declares, he will start building dream-castles with someone who could not possibly be half as nice as Marcia Clinton—at least, that is what both Clinton and his small nephew think on the subject!

"Pat! Don't you think you're too heavy for Miss Trent?"

He has set his young affections indeed upon a most wonderful new inmate of Clinton's household, a being all curls and roguish smiles, who steals Pat's toys and makes herself a general nuisance to everybody.

Humphrey Clinton only dares to express this opinion when his wife is not there to hear him. But Pat thinks Betty Clinton, with her toddling, the dearest thing he ever saw.

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Real Life Romances.

If You or Any of your Friends have ever Gone through Exciting Experiences, Write them up and Send them to the Editor.

Man *versus* Bear.

THE STORY OF A STRANGE WRESTLING MATCH.

THE scene of this remarkable occurrence is laid in Spain—sunny Spain, the land of wine and song, of olives and vineyards, of brigands and toreadors. The hero is Fermin Arndi, a well-known Spanish character. Arndi is a giant—over seven feet high—and is renowned for his splendid physique and enormous strength.

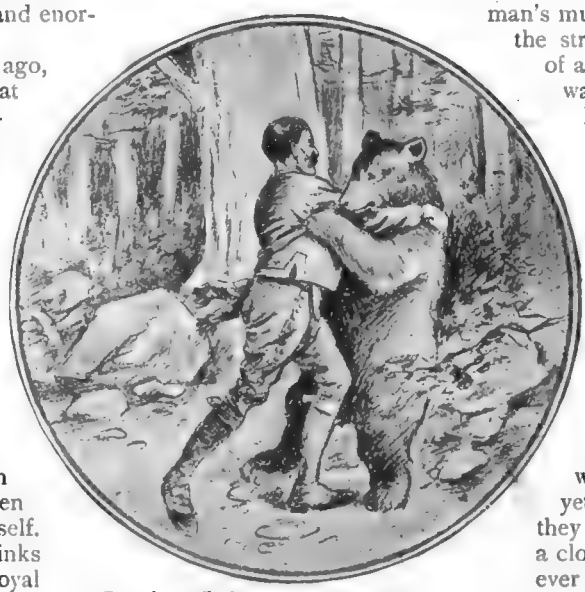
Some little time ago, Arndi, who lives at Salient, in the province of Huesca, was presented, to his huge delight, with a beautiful rifle. Not only was the rifle of exquisite workmanship, but—and this it is which makes the weapon so very precious in the eyes of its proud owner—it was given to Arndi by the Queen Maria Christina herself.

No wonder he thinks a lot of it; what loyal Spaniard would not?

Armed with this precious rifle, Arndi went for a short hunting trip in the Pyrenees. There he shot two bears—one weighing 270 lb., and the other 220 lb. He was proceeding homeward with his quarry—not a bad load even for a giant!—when an extraordinary thing happened. Out of the bushes ahead appeared yet another bear, a huge monster of most terrifying and ferocious aspect. On it came towards the hunter, walking along on its hind legs, with forepaws menacingly extended. Arndi's rifle was not loaded. What should he do? Should he use the butt-end, and with a few crashing blows kill or drive off his furry adversary?

"No, no," thought the giant. "Why, the rifle might break. Anything but that!"

So he threw his burden on the ground, and placed the precious weapon carefully beside it. Then he walked straight up to the powerful monster, and dexterously grasped it in his mighty arms.



Then he walked straight up to the powerful monster, and dexterously grasped it in his mighty arms.

Then began one of the strangest and fiercest wrestling matches which has probably ever taken place. It was a man's muscle pitted against the strength and ferocity of a wild beast. Arndi was wrestling for his life, and he knew it. Defeat meant a dreadful death. Backwards and forwards they swayed; now one with the advantage, now the other. At last, by a supreme effort, Arndi managed to throw his opponent. But Bruin was not done with yet. Over and over they rolled, locked in a close embrace. Was ever such a desperate and evenly-matched struggle?

The bear tore and snapped at the man, its hot, sickening breath almost overpowering him.

At last, however, came the giant's chance. He was able to draw his hunter's knife. Burying the weapon deep in the creature's side, the battle was ended. Arndi was the victor.

Although fatigued after his tremendous exertions, Arndi lifted the carcase and, placing it on his massive shoulders, hurried on to his native town. He then returned for his other trophy—a wonderful feat of endurance.

On subsequently weighing the body of his enemy, Arndi found that it turned the scale at the enormous weight of something over 300 pounds.

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Saved by Singing.

THE STORY OF A LADY'S BRAVERY.

MR. JOHN UNDERWOOD, a New York capitalist, and his wife, had been spending the early summer encamped on the Black Hills, which lie near Custer, South Dakota.

Nothing beyond the usual small adventures common to those unaccustomed to tent-life befell them until one Friday evening. Early in the morning Mr. Underwood had set out to examine certain mines in which he was interested. The afternoon was cool, and, wearying of the monotony of the camp, Mrs. Underwood set out to meet her husband on his way back. Following the faint track through the trees she made her way for a mile. Then a sudden doubt caused her to pause. She looked around. Surely she must be wrong?

With some alarm she turned and sought to retrace her steps. The light was fast growing dim. Where was the track? Walk where she would, to right or left, forwards or backwards, nothing but the dark green, untrampled undergrowth encountered her gaze. Scarcely had she realised her danger, than a hideous roar rent the trees. She half-turned. An icy terror gripped her heart. What happened she could not tell. Something struck her a violent blow on the shoulder, and she fell to the ground, uttering a piercing scream of horror.

When she opened her eyes, the snarling head of a huge, so-called, mountain lion glared savagely back, whilst its heavy paws pressed on her breast.

At the fearful spectacle she screamed again and again in terror. The animal appeared alarmed. Each time her cries rang out it glanced furtively about as if itself in fear.

A wild plan surged to her mind. It cleared her thoughts, and left them ringing with a well-known line. "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast," wrote Congreve. Often in jest she had quoted the phrase, but it now appeared to her as a straw to a drowning man.

Did not her cries appal the lion? What effect would music have upon the brute?

In a voice, first tremulous, but soon regaining steadiness, she began to sing. The lion looked down on her in wonder. Its ominous growling ceased, and the fiery light in its eyes became less baneful. Still it held her in a vice-like grip, which tightened, when after an hour's continuous singing she paused for breath.

Never had anyone sung to such an appreciative listener; never for such a reward. Hour after hour passed, and still she sang on with frenzied desperation. To cease meant death.

* * *

All night a distracted man had searched the woods. His heart was wild with fears. Had his wife fallen a prey to the wild beasts that haunted the mountains and the woods?

Dawn brought fresh hope.

He gripped his gun and raised it slowly to his shoulder.

Was that a human voice which he heard singing in the distance? At each step he took the sound became the clearer.

Suddenly he started off with a run. His heart beat high with hope. Then almost stopped as he parted the branches of a hazel tree, and beheld his wife at the mercy of a mountain lion.

Now his nerves had become as steel. He gripped his gun and raised it slowly to his shoulder. A thousand terrible thoughts played havoc in his mind. If he should miss! He shuddered at the thought, and crept a few yards nearer.

He fired, and the lion rolled over dead. His wife was saved.

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Friends Always.

THE STORY OF A DOG'S DEVOTION.

OF all the passengers on board the Anchor Line's steamboat *Columbia*, none attracted so much attention as a pretty little girl with a stream of golden hair waving down her back. Three days from port there was not a man on board from the Captain on the bridge to the grimy stokers below deck that was not at her beck and call.

Still there was another that excelled all these, who watched her every movement, who played when she played, and guarded her cabin door by night.

This friend was a beautiful Scotch Collie.

The collie was the first to welcome the little girl when she emerged from her cabin in the morning. When others tired of play, he was eager and ever ready to romp with her or to trot up and down the deck with her small arm encircling his shaggy neck.

Then a day dawned when the wind shrieked through the shrouds of the *Columbia*, and great waves dashed themselves against her hull.

The little girl was no longer able to frolic on the deck. Instead, clad in oils from which the water dripped, the sailors moved cautiously on duty.

The collie was the first to welcome the little girl . . . . in the morning.

The captain's face wore a grave look. Yet it was not the roaring ocean that occasioned it. His thoughts clung to a little scene that was taking place in a cabin below.

The little girl was ill—very ill. Even the doctor, accustomed to treat such patients with a happy confidence, now gravely shook his head.

Still he fought. If only the terrible rolling of the ship would cease the child might yet be saved. But all day long and through the night the storm raged, and the baby girl, rent with fearful sickness, grew hourly weaker.

And through those long hours the collie watched beside his little mistress with eyes that all but spoke his grief.

* * * * * *

The *Columbia* lay motionless in a gently heaving sea of gold. A sad crowd of passengers and sailors knelt with eyes bent on the outlines of the British flag.

Each one's thoughts were of the pretty child, and women wept and gazed pityingly on the desolate collie.

Then the solemn words of the burial service fell brokenly on the stillness.

The dog glanced uneasily from one face to another. To all it seemed that he knew quite well what was taking place. His restless, wondering eyes spoke words that needed no voice to emphasise. Why was his little mistress so still—the little mistress that he loved better than all the world? And no cry of sympathy fell more touchingly than did the collie's pleading whine.

"We therefore commit her body to the deep," resounded the words of the burial service, and two sailors moved reverently to perform the duty. At their approach the collie rose from beside the flag, and again his piteous grief rang through the ship.

Unsteadily the chaplain's voice arose above the little splash that told so much: "When the sea shall give up her——"

A wail of anguish, almost human in its intensity, stayed the utterance. Men paled, and women clung to each other in a fear of what they knew not. Then were they conscious of a sound of scampering feet, and the ringing, persistent cry of an animal in dire distress. A moment a vision shone clearly, never to be forgotten. They saw the long, handsome coated body of the collie leap from the ship, and heard it plunge into the swirling depths whither its little mistress had departed.

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Held Up.

THE STORY OF A TRAIN ROBBERY.

HALF-PAST eleven marked the big clock in Berlin station. Porters hurried hither and thither, threading their way among the crowd of passengers that stood before the Norderney express.

To the seaside! These words plainly shone on the faces of three children, who, with their nurse, were standing on the platform beside their mother. Still more it was clearly visible in the three spades and bright enamelled buckets reposing on the racks in the carriages near by.

Frau Noelle, wife of Privy Financial Councillor Noelle, stepped into the train, followed by the nurse and her three excited children, and soon the train had steamed out into the warm July night.

How exciting it was to the three small children! By daylight the next morning they would be paddling in the blue sea of Norderney. After a while the chatter in the carriage ceased, and nothing but the loud rumble of the fast travelling carriage could be heard. Above the hills the moon poured down, lighting the landscape and streaming dimly through the darkened compartment.

"Your money or your life!"

Presently a child's voice sounded above the roar of wheels: "Mother, mother, I saw a man creep past our carriage window."

Frau Noelle laughed, and said it was not possible, and that the child was dreaming.

How long she had slept Frau Noelle did not know, but with a sudden feeling of fear she opened her eyes, dimly conscious that someone had entered the carriage.

Words that had sounded romantic in the pages of books, but which now seemed filled with dread significance, fell on her ears:

"Your money or your life."

Terrified beyond measure, Frau Noelle stared helplessly at the dark outlines of a man, who, standing before her, was holding a revolver.

"Where did you come from?" she gasped.

The man glanced at the door, then repeated his demand.

The frightened lady drew from her pocket one hundred marks and nervously held them out to him.

"It is not enough," the man cried, turning his head so that the light from the partially-shaded lamp fell on his face. A cloth mask hid his eyes and nostrils, and his mouth was smeared with some dark mixture. He was well dressed.

Frau Noelle glanced at her sleeping children, and she felt glad that they had not awakened.

The man's eyes were fixed on her, and she drew four more notes of a hundred marks.

"That is all I have," she said.

Mumuring words that seemed to approach thanks, the man turned to the children. With a cry of horror the mother saw him shake the nearest boy into wakefulness, and at the point of his revolver take the few marks that the child had in his pocket. He did the same with the second and third, and, last of all, relieved the nurse, speechless with fear, of her purse. Then, opening the carriage door, he paused a moment.

"I am no robber," he said. "I did this because I was driven to it. Never again shall I figure in such a *rôle* as this."

With that he leaped from the train.

Nothing more was ever heard of the man, in spite of the inquiries instituted by Frau Noelle's family. He sprang upon her mysteriously out of the night, and vanished as mysteriously back into the night again.

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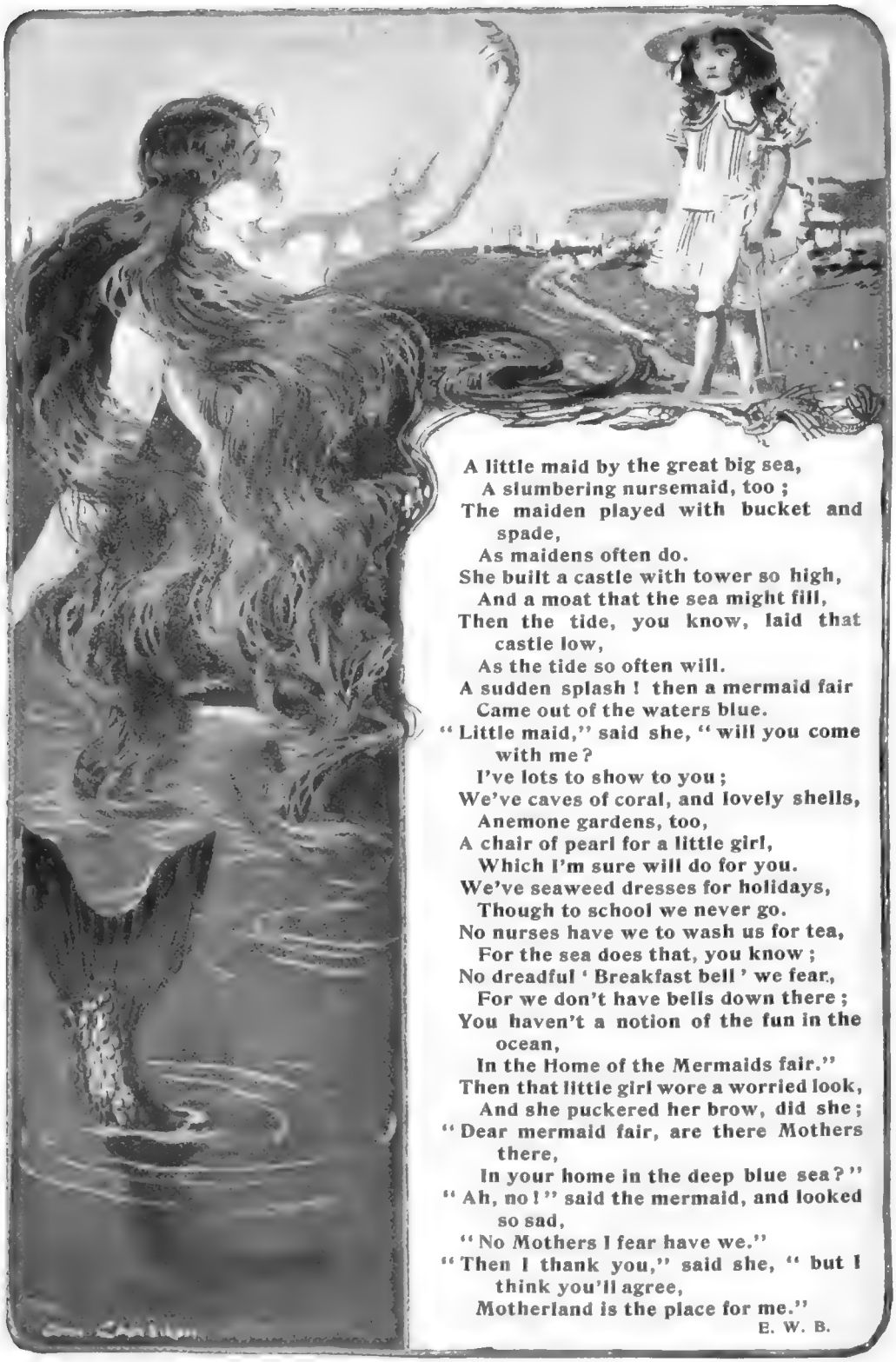
The Two Maidens.



A little maid by the great big sea,
A slumbering nursemaid, too;
The maiden played with bucket and spade,
As maidens often do.
She built a castle with tower so high,
And a moat that the sea might fill,
Then the tide, you know, laid that castle low,
As the tide so often will.
A sudden splash! then a mermaid fair
Came out of the waters blue.
"Little maid," said she, "will you come with me?
I've lots to show to you;
We've caves of coral, and lovely shells,
Anemone gardens, too,
A chair of pearl for a little girl,
Which I'm sure will do for you.
We've seaweed dresses for holidays,
Though to school we never go.
No nurses have we to wash us for tea,
For the sea does that, you know;
No dreadful 'Breakfast bell' we fear,
For we don't have bells down there;
You haven't a notion of the fun in the ocean,
In the Home of the Mermaids fair."
Then that little girl wore a worried look,
And she puckered her brow, did she;
"Dear mermaid fair, are there Mothers there,
In your home in the deep blue sea?"
"Ah, no!" said the mermaid, and looked so sad,
"No Mothers I fear have we."
"Then I thank you," said she, "but I think you'll agree,
Motherland is the place for me."

E. W. B.

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THE NOBLE ART

How Prize Fights at the National Sporting Club and at the East-enders' "Wonderland" are Conducted.

By A. E. Johnson.

The market-place at Covent Garden is dark and deserted, the carts and barrows tarpaulin-covered, and the lofty piles of empty baskets looming dimly in the shadows. But at the corner of King Street there is stir and commotion. A knot of men and lads, rough-garbed and coarse of speech, hang about the pavement before the lighted portals of the imposing building there. The hour is late, but hansom cabs are dashing up in quick succession, and through the swinging doors a constant stream of men is passing. Most are in evening dress, but so diverse their types that it would puzzle the curious stranger to guess what common object they have in view.

Amongst them pass in unquestioned others who, it is evident by their dress and bearing, rank a good deal lower in the social scale. All sorts and conditions of men, in brief; and many of them not unpossessed, it would seem, of fame or notoriety, if account be taken of the frequent nudges and audible comments exchanged between the loafers on the pavement, as a familiar face passes them and ascends the steps.

The building is the National Sporting Club, and to-night is the occasion of a big fight between two of the leading lights of the modern Ring. The event has for long been eagerly discussed and anticipated, and half the sporting world has come to see the issue of it.

On the threshold of the club stand two or three doorkeepers, while the entrance to the vestibule is obstructed by a small barrier. "Are you a member, sir?" asks the stalwart attendant of every fresh arrival whose face is unfamiliar, and tickets are produced from overcoat pockets. Men are hurrying to and fro across the floor, and from beyond comes the subdued hum of many voices.

On the far side of the vestibule are the club rooms and lounges. Round the bar and gathered at the tables numerous groups of men talk, joke, and drink amongst themselves. One topic of conversation holds the entire room—the coming fight.

There are men of all ages here—grey-headed veterans, learned in the lore of the Ring, and young bloods pleased to have themselves considered as patrons of "the fancy."

Beyond the lounge, the doorways give upon a balcony that overlooks a remarkable scene. The gallery runs round three sides of the auditorium of a small theatre. But the stage is bare of scenery, and holds instead, framed within the proscenium, a mixed assembly of spectators, banked up row upon row. Underneath, upon the floor where ordinarily pit and stalls should be, is a raised daïs, or platform, whereon is staked out the square, triple-corded "ring." All round, covering every available inch of space, rise tiers and tiers of seats, all facing inward and inclosing the square white patch, which is the resin-sprinkled floor of the ring, with high, sloping walls. In the balcony more seats. And every seat is occupied.

There have been several bouts in the ring earlier in the evening, but the great event has been fixed for a late hour to enable members and their friends to dine at leisure and discharge their social engagements. That hour

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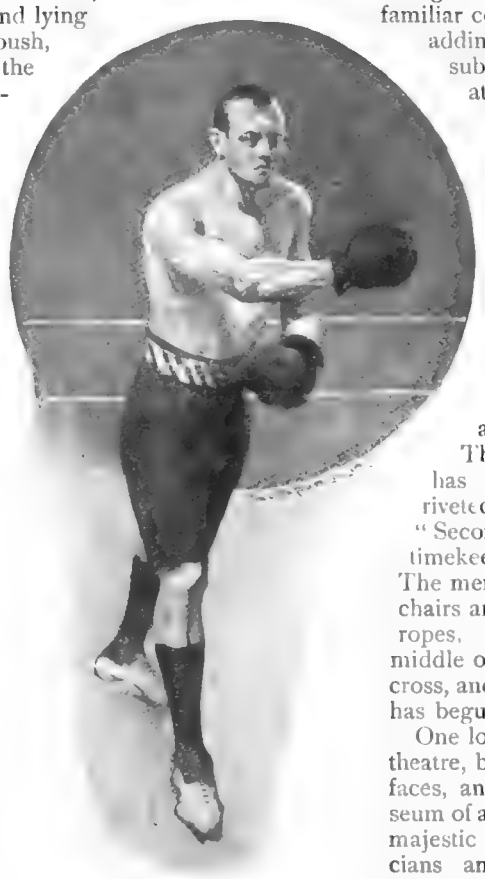
is fast approaching, and the theatre is filled to the last foot of standing room with an expectant throng.

Along the front of the stage runs a green-baize-covered table, and here, with "copy" paper laid in readiness in front of them, sit the sporting scribes of Fleet Street. Below them, but slightly elevated above the spectators on the floor of the theatre, is a small table or desk, and lying upon it an electric bell-push, communicating with the gong concealed underneath.

At this rostrum, with his watch, its dial upturned before him, sits jauntily the timekeeper, immaculate in attire, with the shiniest of silk hats tilted at the sauciest of angles upon his head. At his elbow is the referee, in his day himself an amateur of no mean repute with the gloves—a grave, impassive gentleman, with cigar tight-clenched between his teeth, whose face alone in all the assembly seems to show no expectant curiosity.

Suddenly the hum of talk is hushed. There is momentary silence as, pushing his way through the press along the narrow gangway that leads from the ring to the dressing-rooms, the figure of one of the combatants is seen approaching. Then a rattle of applause, mingled with cheers, goes round the house.



One of the combatants. The men's muscles of iron, sinews of whipcord and gleaming skins show that they are trained to a hair.

The boxer, evidently gratified by the warmth of his reception, grins sheepishly, and bows awkwardly as he mounts the staging and stoops under the ropes. At his heels are his seconds—burly men in sweaters and flannel trousers, with close-cropped heads, and faces of the unmistakable pugilistic type. They take possession of the further corner of the ring, and their man drops into the chair they place inside the ropes to await the coming of his opponent. A second burst of cheering and hand-clapping greets the appearance of the latter. In another moment the two men are looking at each other from their respective corners, and Mr. Bettinson, the popular secretary of the N.S.C., has stepped into the ring and is holding up his hand.

"Gentlemen," he begins, and to the listening assembly repeats the already familiar conditions of the match, adding the weights (here a subdued murmur from the attentive audience) at which the men scaled in the afternoon. With a gesture of the hand to each in turn he names the combatants and retires, while the applause breaks out anew.

The gloves are handed out, and deftly put on and laced by the busy seconds. Follows a pause of tense silence. The hum of conversation has ceased; all eyes are riveted, intent, upon the ring.

"Seconds out!" says the timekeeper. "Time!"

The men rise, alert, and as their chairs are whisked through the ropes, they advance to the middle of the ring, shake hands, cross, and turn. The great fight has begun.

One looks round the crowded theatre, banked high with eager faces, and thinks of the Colosseum of ancient Rome, within the majestic walls of which patricians and plebs watched the fierce battle of the gladiators. Here are the same essential features, though the spacious arena has shrunk to an 18-foot ring, and, instead of the fillet and the flowing toga, the tiers of seats display the formal white shirt and the orthodox crush hat. As for the gladiators, they offer, perhaps, the least contrast. It is true they fight with 4-oz. gloves, and not with the cestus, but in all else they are the same—two brute men with muscles of iron and sinews of whipcord, whose gleaming skins show them fit and trained to a hair.

Or one thinks of the Georgian days of the prize ring — the palmy days, as they are

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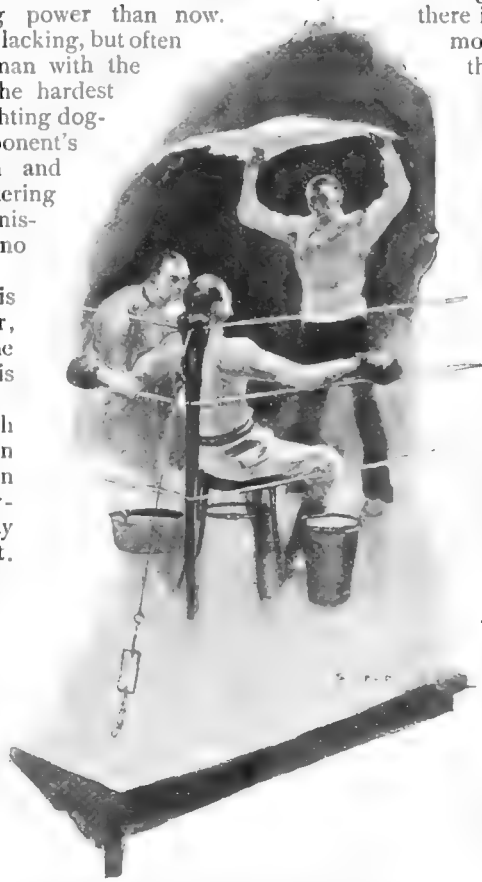
sometimes called—when the prospect of a fight with the bare knuckles on the Sussex Downs caused an exodus of the whole fashionable world from town, and the title of Champion of England was the proudest, in the popular mind, to which a man could aspire. The scene before us is again the same essentially as that over which the noble "Corinthians" of a bygone age used to gloat; but there are differences in detail. In the old days the "noble art" was far more a matter of brute strength and staying power than now. Certainly skill was not lacking, but often it happened that the man with the hardest hands and the hardest head won the day—fighting doggedly on until his opponent's hands were swollen and puffed with the battering knocks they had administered, and could hit no more.

What the N.S.C. is to the West-ender, "Wonderland" in the Whitechapel Road is to the East-ender.

It is a roughish company that pours in with us through the open doors of "Wonderland" on a Saturday or Monday night. Curiously enough, again we find ourselves in a converted theatre, more spacious, however, than that at the West-end club. On the dingy stage are shabby rows of elevated seats, and at one side the timekeeper's gong and table. The ring is situated upon a raised platform in the body of the hall, and on every side all available space is taken up by seating accommodation. Directly over the ring a couple of flaring gas-jets fling their light garishly upon the tiny arena. The air is full of smoke from shag-laden pipes that hangs heavily overhead and obscures the roof with a thin veil of blue-grey mist.

It is in the spectators that one finds the most interesting feature of the entertainment which "Wonderland" has to offer. They are a rough-looking lot for the most part—typical East-enders, and as such numbering amongst them all manner of men and nationalities. Costers, navvies, dock labourers, and artisans in corduroys and fustian, a knotted kerchief round the neck, a short clay pipe between the teeth; soldiers and sailors (some with comrades, very likely, billed to appear presently in the ring) in uniform, the scarlet and blue showing up markedly here and there in the crowd; aliens of almost every continental breed that the slums of the metropolis harbour — Poles, Russians, Germans, and the rest; Jew men and Jew boys innumerable, large of nose, glossy of hair, and lisping of speech —the genuine "Sheeny," in brief. Barmen and waiters patrol the gangways, taking orders for drinks, and boys with trays bearing bowls of jellied eels do a thriving trade.



When the round is finished each man retires to his corner, and his seconds fan him with towels and sponge his face.

When the big events of the night come on, the spectators wake up. They want value for their money —and they get it. Feeling runs high when the fight is a close one, and it is often a matter of some difficulty to keep the more unruly in hand. It is unfair play in the ring, when such occurs, that causes trouble. Any attempt at foul tactics or shady tricks is instantly detected and howled down with indignant fury.

A bad plucked 'un—the white-livered poltroon who goes to the floor to avoid a blow—is greeted with merciless jeers, hisses, and hootings. In vain the better-behaved of those present shout cries of "Order!" In vain the bull-throated M.C. waves his ample, cotton-gloved hands and roars "Gentlemen!" again and again in an endeavour to make himself heard above the din. The innocent begins to wonder if violent measures are intended, and half fears the place may be wrecked. The *habitué*, however,

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knows better, and calmly waits for the storm to blow over.

But to return to the N.S.C. As one watches the two lithe figures circling and sparring, another contrast with the earlier days of the prize-ring is presented to the mind. In those days the great men of the Ring were mostly the bigger, heavier boxers. No ingenious division of the pugilistic fraternity into bantam-weights, feather-weights, light-weights, middle-weights, and the rest of it, had been devised, nor had the boxer's skill been elaborated, as at the present day, into little short of science.

It is this science, this exposition of perfect skill, which forms the fascinating feature of the fight to-night. The ring-craft is amazing. Blows are dealt, exchanged, and eluded with a celerity and a dexterity that fill the lay spectator with astonishment.

Periodically the timekeeper, whose glance recurs constantly to the chronometer before him, presses the button upon his desk, and the round is terminated by the sudden tinkling of the bell underneath. Sometimes this happens at a moment of breathless excitement, when the fight looks like coming to a summary conclusion; but the clock is inexorable, and often a weakening man is saved by the gong in the nick of time.

The end of each round is punctuated with applause, while the seconds, springing into the ring, fan their men vigorously with towels flapped in the air, sponge their faces, and take other measures to revive them. The hum of conversation is resumed, and the room buzzes with the excited comments of the spectators, till the laconic "Seconds out!" of the nonchalant timekeeper brings a sudden silence again.

Outside, on the pavement, an excited mob clamours round the steps of the club. King Street is crowded with all the riff-raff that pick up a precarious living as hangers-on of the Ring. From time to time word is passed out to them by the doorkeepers of how the fight is progressing, and the news is caught up and passed from mouth to mouth.

In the shelter of a doorway near by is a sobbing woman, sympathetically attended by one or two companions, and watched, open-mouthed, with a kind of awed curiosity by the loafers and street-urchins. She is the wife of one of the fighters, hysterically waiting for news as to how "her man" is faring. A report flies about that at the end of the last round he was behind on points, and she breaks out into fresh weeping, refusing to be comforted.

Within, as the fight continues, the excitement increases. Both combatants show the effects of the strain, but their splendid physical condition, the result of long and careful training, keeps them going.

"Good lad, good lad!" raps out a short, stout man, forgetting himself in the fervour of the moment, and springing up in his seat as the boxer he favours lands a flush hit upon his opponent's jaw. "I'll take 5 to 2!" comes a sudden shout from the balcony. The odds are lengthening with every round, but it takes an experienced eye to detect the covert betting.

The tale of rounds is mounting up, and the fight is nearing its limit. The tension is almost painful. Men are breathing heavily, and alone in all that crowded assembly the referee appears unmoved. Will the fight go its full course, or will——

Straight from the shoulder, the arm of one of the men in the ring shoots suddenly out. The glove lands fairly upon the point of the other's jaw, and like a felled ox he staggers, droops, and collapses in a heap upon the floor. In an instant the whole house is in an uproar. Men leap to their feet, cheering, yelling, waving hats in the air, and brandishing their arms. For the moment, pandemonium!

The referee has risen, and through all the din are heard his level tones in stern command: "Stand away there, stand *right* away!" The unhurt boxer, flushed with triumph, walks over to his corner, and stands there waiting. In the middle of the ring lies his prostrate rival, now slowly regaining consciousness, and feebly trying to raise himself. But his limbs are as logs, his feet as lead. Outside the ropes his seconds are shrieking wildly to him, cursing, threatening, cajoling, and almost dancing in their frenzy.

There is a lull in the tornado of noise; all eyes are upon the fallen man, struggling with pallid face to rise. The suspense is breathless—painful.

"Time!" The bell tinkles, and the uproar this time is terrific. The referee, inaudible, points mutely to the victor. The seconds of the vanquished man spring into the ring, and carry his helpless body to the corner. Cold water quickly does its work, and in a few moments he is sitting up in his chair. The winner crosses the ring, and proffers his hand; then, turning, hurries to the dressing-room amidst deafening cheers, the loser following a few moments later amidst applause not a whit less generous.

Five minutes afterwards whistles are blowing shrilly outside, and the cabs are rattling briskly westward through the empty streets.

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A fight at the National Sporting Club, seen from the proscenium. When a big fight is in progress there is not a vacant seat in the building.

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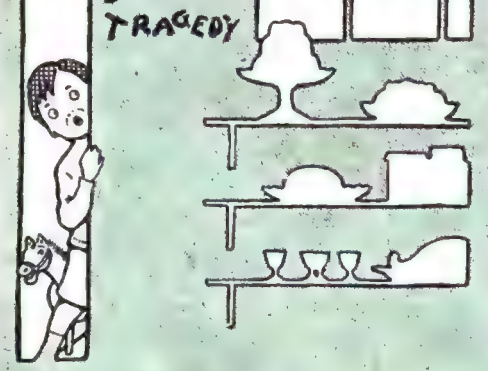
SURREPTITIOUS SAMPLING

A DOMESTIC TRAGEDY



I.

The larder door stood just ajar,
Instead of being shut,
Revealing several things that are
For festivals intended. BUT—

II.

A little boy stood just outside
That door; and growing stiff
With gazing round it, eager-eyed,
If it were *really* open! IF—

III.

A very gentle push, not more,
He wouldn't dream—oh, no!
And Richard stood within the door
Of earthly Paradise. AND SO—

IV.

Those wobbly jellies and that cream,
Upon the shelves just set,
Looked tempting, Was it all a dream?
Of course he wouldn't *touch* them. YET—

V.

He didn't think the *least-est* taste
Would matter. Should he try?
His mind, time-pressed, made up in haste,
Young Richard rashly yielded. WHY—

VI.

Oh, why should jellies touched like that
Rock wildly till they fell?
And why should creams just sit down flat?
He really didn't mean to—WELL—

VII.

They did. So where would be the use
Of leaving them, you know?
"Whate'er I do, I've no excuse,
I'm sure to get the blame. ALTHOUGH—

VIII.

"The cook *might* think it was the cat—
I'll leave them, yes, I will.
Oh, ye-es, I'll le-eave them just like that;
O-f co-urse I-I'll leave them." STILL—

IX.

The boy is lost who hesitates;
And Richard's little hand
Stole (accidentally) towards the plates
On which the ruins rested. AND—

X.

It wasn't very long before
Those creams and jellies slept
Beneath his vest. He gained the door,
Unseen of mortal eye—EXCEPT—!!!

Reginald Rigby.

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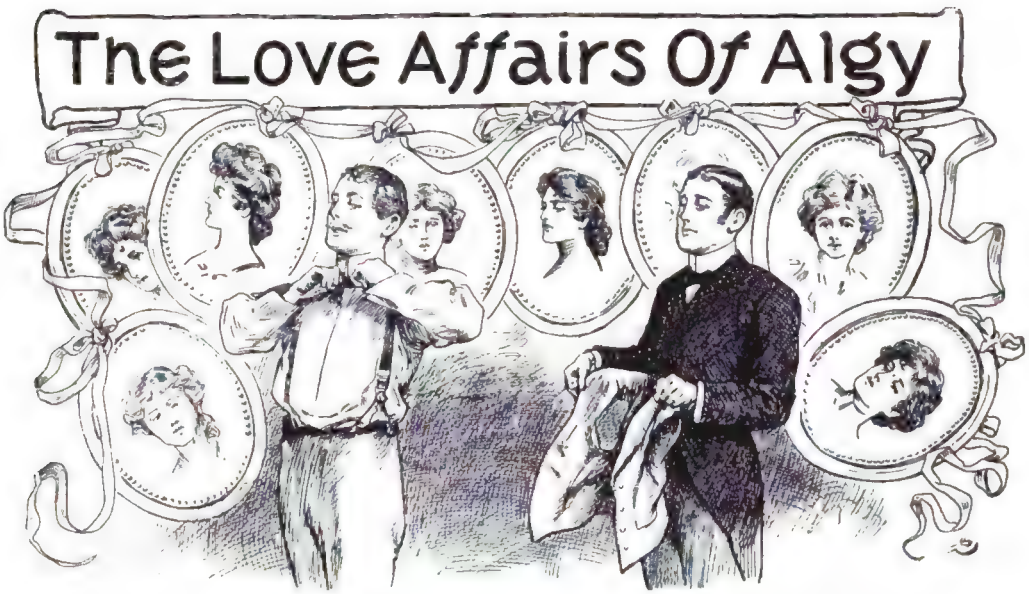
The Love Affairs Of Algy



This is the Fourth of a Series of Stories, Each Complete in Itself, Describing the Flirtations of the Hon. Algernon Marmaduke Brightlingsea.

No. IV.—HIS OCTOBER GIRL: THE ADVENTURE OF THE GOLDEN CROSS.

By Marcus Woodward.

The curtain, on rising, discloses the Hon. Algernon Brightlingsea, arrayed in a glorious dressing-gown, seated at his breakfast table in his flat in St. James's Street, on a morning in the month of October.

Algy had spent the night in town on his way from pheasant shooting in Hampshire to grouse shooting on a Scottish moor, whither he was bound by a train leaving London at three o'clock in the afternoon. As he peered critically through his eye-glass at the contents of the breakfast dishes, the thought uppermost in his mind was—"How in the world shall I pass the morning?"

Omelets and mushrooms failing to inspire an idea, Algy turned to a pile of letters. The first twelve envelopes suggested nothing but writing cheques in settlement of bills, or notes in settlement of invitations; the thirteenth contained the looked-for inspiration for the morning's amusement. His host in Scotland begged that he would be so kind as to procure in London a piece of jewelery required for a wedding present.

"And that reminds me," said Algy, "*I* must buy something for our friend the bride. And something handsome," he added, "considering the number of times I myself have proposed to the lady!"

Revolving in his mind the relative appropriateness of bangles and necklaces, Algy finished his breakfast. Toilet completed, letters written, valet instructed as to the catching of the train, he sauntered forth presently into the street to pass the morning with such entertainment as he might.

In view of the jewelery to be bought, and the journey to be made, his funds needed replenishment. Algy called, therefore, at his bankers in Pall Mall to arm himself with a roll of notes, before strolling across the Park to the Stores.

To those who had eyes for appearances, Algy's appearance was suggestive. It proclaimed nothing definite, for he abhorred loudness; but his tall, somewhat languid figure, immaculately clad—he was nothing if not a dandy—the easy grace of his carriage, not without its hint of swagger, and the eye-glass that gave point to a face otherwise somewhat pointless—all combined to make him a notable figure.

A cabman, who came upon him suddenly from round a corner, pulled up his horse with a "Beg pardon, *my lord!*"—a title often applied to him by waiters, guards, and others with an eye for their man. Two police-constables, crossing the Park from the

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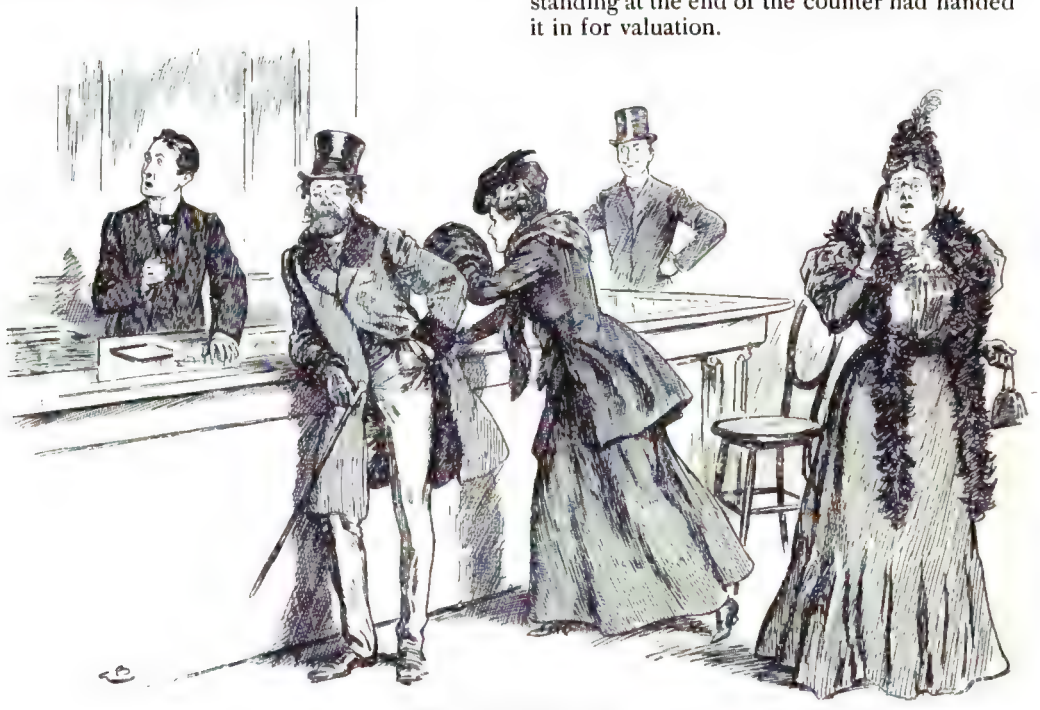
direction of Downing Street, speculated as to which under-secretary Algy was secretary—and spoke of the power of influence as compared with the power of brains. A crossing-sweeper ceased sweeping at his approach, cap held expectantly in hand. And a lady, whom Algy did not observe as she came in his direction from a side-path, was sufficiently interested in his appearance to hurry her steps a little in order to follow him closely. Algy first noticed her as a passenger in the lift that carried him to the jewelery department in the Stores; and the curve of her cheek in profile held his eye while his mind still debated the vexed question—Bangle or necklace?

A sudden jerk of the lift on stopping caused Algy to sway lightly against the lady; and the smile at his profuse apologies that illuminated a pale, somewhat sad face, quite captivated his susceptible heart. He noticed that she was dainty, *petite*, balanced on tiny feet, and clad all in black. He regretted to lose sight of her in the confusion of leaving the lift while a group of shoppers struggled for entrance.

A few moments later Algy caught himself wondering how she, the fair unknown, would grace the necklaces and bangles which a salesman offered for his choice. A string of deep-hued rubies would, he thought, give admirable contrast to so white a face and neck; and a bangle of solid gold, studded with sapphires and diamonds, he decided to be too heavy for her slender wrist.

"This, sir, is a lovely thing."

The salesman displayed a cross of old gold, loaded with massive jewels; such a cross as might have adorned the breast of a saint's image in an Italian chapel. He explained, in a confidential whisper, that the customer standing at the end of the counter had handed it in for valuation.



Then the cat pounced.

Algy turned his monocle in the direction indicated.

"A shabby-looking customer," he commented. "I should like to know how *he* came by such a cross"; and the salesman agreed that the thing was suspicious as he handed the cross to another attendant. Algy returned to the contemplation of the necklace and the bangle. The bangle won the day—and was bought, with a pendant of pearls and diamonds, which seemed exactly to fulfil the conditions of his commission. While he waited for the change from the bank-note he had tendered in payment, he became suddenly interested in the movements of the little lady in black, the curve of whose profile had so taken his fancy in the lift.

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He watched her approach the counter with a silent, swift, and stealthy movement that reminded him of a cat—a cat about to pounce. She hovered behind the line of customers intent on jewels and trinkets, and came at last to where the shabby individual at the far end of the counter still awaited the verdict on the value of his cross. Algy was wondering what her purpose could be when a sudden shrill scream rang out from the direction of the lift.

Then the cat pounced.

Algy concluded later that he must have been the only person in the department who had paid any attention to the movements of the lady in black. He, at any rate, must have been the only one to keep an eye upon her when the sensation of the scream occurred, and to see the swift movement by which she snatched the golden, jewel-studded cross from the counter. The attention of the salesmen and customers—perhaps of detectives, too—had been drawn by the scream—doubtless the trick of a confederate. Algy alone watched the thief slip like an eel through the press that thronged to the lift-well, and pass swiftly to the staircase.

Thief—or kleptomaniac? He debated the point as he gathered up his change, and pocketed his purchases; also the question that arose: Should he tell of what he had seen? Conscience prompted him to do so; his sense of admiration for a pretty face weighed down the balance of decision on the side of silence. And then Algy's love of an adventure sent him, on a sudden thought, hastening down the staircase, three steps to a stride—at so reckless a pace that as he swung round a curve of the steps he trod on the skirts of the very object of his quest. There was a ripping of stuff; and again the pale face was upturned to Algy's with a questioning glance.

"Oh—it's you again!"

Algy mumbled an apology for the second time.

"The fact is, you know," he said, beginning to feel somewhat embarrassed, and stuttering in consequence, "the fact is—er—aw—I—er—*wanted* you."

"Wanted *me?*"

"Y—y—yes," stuttered Algy. "Because, don't you know, I saw you take it."

"Take it—take what?"

"Why," said Algy, "the g—g—golden c—c—cross."

"This, do you mean?"

The cross was withdrawn from a muff, and upheld to Algy's view.

"Y—y—yes; and I say, you know, it won't do to pretend innocence—I—er—saw you—aw—steal it, don't you know!"

"Well—I did steal it—and cleverly, didn't I? But as it happens to be my own cross, I had good reason to do so."

The surge of the shoppers on the stairs made conversation difficult.

"We can't talk here," said the little lady in black, "but come into the open air, and I will tell you all about it, since you are so interested. And I owe you an explanation. Besides, I should like you to understand that it's all right, or you might set a policeman on me; and I hate fusses. Come along!"

"Thief or kleptomaniac, she's certainly bewitching," thought Algy. Her profile seemed to him adorable as they descended the stairs together, crossed the hall, and passed into the street. The ruby necklace he had admired was made, he decided, for her neck. Asked to put the gold cross in his pocket, he did so, and was touched by her confidence.

"Let us go into the Park," suggested his companion. "We can sit in the sun for a few minutes, and have a quiet chat. That is," and she looked up to him with her flashing smile, "if you can spare the time?"

"I have nothing in the world to do this morning," said Algy, "and I'm deeply interested." He added: "I say, you know, I—I hope you didn't mind my thinking you a thief?"

"Not at all—I *was* a thief. But of my own property, you understand. Shall I prove it? On the back of the cross you will find my name—Louise de la Croix! Rather appropriate, isn't it? Look and you will see."

"A name as appropriate as it is pretty," said Algy, examining the cross, and finding the name, lightly engraved. "A family heirloom, I presume."

"Yes—but it has a long story. Wait till we are seated and can talk in comfort."

They turned into the Park—where Algy soon found an empty bench, made inviting by the October sunshine.

"Now," he said, as they seated themselves, "please begin at the beginning."

"You shall be my judge," she said, flashing her smile at him; "and if you find me guilty, you have only to call a policeman."

Every suspicion Algy might have harboured fell to pieces before her engaging ways; to be pulverised to atoms when she added in a low voice: "I know I can trust you to be fair to me—your face is so kind!"

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Algy sought, found, and pressed a small, shapely hand.

"The story begins," she went on, "right away back in the days of Jeanne d'Arc, in the year 1429, when the Maid gained her victory over the English at the siege of Orleans. And what a strange thing that a deed done by a poor Biscayan soldier nearly five centuries ago should have brought you and me together this day!"

Algy said with a gasp that it was wonderful—perfectly wonderful, and begged to be told what the poor soldier had done to bring about such a happy event.

"He did a brave thing. He was the Maid's standard-bearer, you must know, and he led the assault on the wall of the Tourelles—the English fort. He bore a great cross, from which the Maid's banner flew; and she had told the Orleannais that directly the banner touched the walls of the fort the day would be theirs. You see how much depended on the poor soldier. Well, he touched the wall with the banner, and the day was won. And afterwards the Dauphin, when he was crowned king, heaped honours on the soldier, and among other things he gave him the cross you have seen in commemoration of the day; and he took the name, de la Croix. I'm proud to bear it."

"Then he was your ancestor?" Algy was hugely delighted.

"Both on my mother's and my father's side, for my mother married her cousin. The cross, you must understand, has been handed down from generation to generation. At home we have an old manuscript—I should like to show it to you—telling the whole story. You can believe that we de la Croixs have always regarded the cross as a sacred possession. My mother, who inherited it, gave it to me, and I would not lose it again for the world."

Algy was deeply touched. He ventured once more to press the hand of the descendant of the brave Biscayan soldier. Tears came to her eyes as she went on to speak of the sad days on which her family had fallen.

Algy sought, found, and pressed a small, shapely hand.

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Her father, Algy gathered, had ruined her mother's life, and squandered the little fortune which she had inherited. Finally, he had deserted them, leaving the mother broken-hearted and almost penniless.

"But you kept the cross from him?" Algy inquired.

"I guarded it with my life," she answered simply.

"And how in the end did you lose it?"

Her vehement reply, the sudden flush of righteous wrath that rose to her pale cheeks, startled him.

"He stole it!" she cried. "Stole it while I was asleep—the despicable sneak! Everything else of my mother's he had stolen—her fortune, jewels, heirlooms, the very trinkets from her dressing-table! When she had no more to lose he left her. One night he came back and stole the golden cross from beneath the pillow of his own daughter as she lay asleep."

Algy ground his teeth, and muttered fierce invectives; sobs shook the little figure beside him. He did his best to comfort her, heedless of the passers-by. Presently she went on, speaking swiftly, with tears still in her eyes and in her voice:

"Just now, quite by chance, I observed my father in the Stores, and you may imagine with what feelings when I saw that he held in his hand my golden cross."

"Ah, the blackguard!" Algy was finely aroused. "I myself saw him; he was trying to sell the cross. And he was your father!"

Louise de la Croix upturned her pale face to Algy with a trustful smile.

"You don't think me a thief now?" she said. "You won't call the police?"

* * * * *

Half-an-hour later they were crossing London in a hansom cab.

"I say, you know," Algy was saying, "Joan of Arc herself wasn't half so brave as you. You deserve to be canonised!"

His companion laughed.

"Saint-Louise-who-stole-the-cross!"

"Saint-Louise-who-stole-my-heart! She has one worshiper already."

The cabman, taking a sly look at his fares through the trap-door, chuckled at what he saw.

When a little later he ventured again to spy, the lady was saying: "My mother will be delighted to see you!"

"I shall tell her, you know," said Algy, "exactly what I think of her daughter."

"Pray don't tell her what you told *me* about the curve of my cheek—she would turn you out of the house if you did!"

"It's the most kissable cheek in Christendom," vowed Algy, and the cabman had cause to chuckle again. So completely, in the space of a sunny half hour passed on an October morning in the Park, had Louise de la Croix turned the head of the Hon. Algernon Brightlingsea.

He had insisted on escorting Louise to her home, in spite of every protest. She had told him frankly that the home was not fit to receive him, adding that now they could afford to live only in two small rooms in a tenement house on the south side of the Thames. His answer had been to call a cab, and he had made the most of the opportunities that a hansom offers a young man who fancies himself desperately in love with the lady beside him. All too soon for Algy the cab came to a standstill before a dingy building in a narrow street.

"Behold the shrine of St. Louise!" gaily cried his companion. "Now, if you will wait in the cab just two minutes, I'll run to see if mother is in—we have a side door down the alley." She sprang lightly from the cab, picked up her skirts, and tripped daintily to the corner, pausing only to wave a trimly-gloved little hand before disappearing from view.

Algy, thus deserted, bethought him of his train to Scotland, timed to leave at three o'clock, and unbuttoned his overcoat to feel for his watch. It was not in its place.

"Strange—must have forgotten to bring it," he muttered.

The cabman informed him that one o'clock had just struck.

He wondered if two minutes had passed, and fell idly to studying the table of cab-fares, an occupation that suggested paying his cabman. He sent a hand diving into the pocket where he carried his silver change; but no coins rattled.

"Must have forgotten to bring any loose change, too," thought Algy; then remembered that at the Stores a handful of gold coins had been tendered him in exchange for the bank-note with which he had paid for the wedding presents. "There must have been eight or nine pounds," he recalled; but no trace of them could he find.

Thinking that some pickpocket at the Stores must have grabbed his change as he rushed for the staircase in pursuit of her whom he had mistaken—so foolishly—for a thief, Algy next sought in an inner pocket where he carried his sovereign-case. That

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at least was in place, but—mystery of mysteries!—it was empty.

Algy stepped from the cab to the pavement to make a more thorough search. He felt for his pocket book, which should contain not only his cheque-book and cards, but a bank-note for fifty pounds—one of two which he had taken from the bank only a few hours before. The pocket-book was in place, but, like the sovereign-case—empty!

He stood on the pavement, gazing into the folds of the case like one distraught. Looking up at last, he became aware that a group of urchins had gathered round him, staring open-mouthed. His cabman, too, appeared deeply interested in his movements; and, on catching his eye, volunteered the suggestion: "How about your tie-pin, mister?"

He raised his hand to feel for a pin, rare and much valued—that, too, had flown; and he now saw that a fine signet-ring had been drawn from his little finger. Nor was there any trace of his cigar-case, his match-box, or his pencil-case—all of gold. "And, by Jove!" he cried suddenly, "a link's gone too!" The mate of the diamond sleeve-link in his right cuff was missing. It was then no matter of surprise to Algy that the two packets containing the wedding presents, for which he had exchanged the better part of a £50 note, were absent also.

"No doubt about it," said the cab-driver, "she's cleaned you out—and I'll tell you what, mister," he added sententiously, "we may wait here till kingdom come, and we shall never see her again. That's *my* opinion."

Algy made no answer. If the fellow were right, he thought, this was the cruellest blow of his life. The cabman suggested that he should drive to the nearest police-station to give information of his losses, but he shook his head—never that. On the man speaking of his fare, he realised that *something* must be done—sent one sorrowful look in the direction whence the thief had departed: and stepped swiftly into the cab.

"County Bank, Pall Mall," he said shortly to the driver, "and hang your impertinence."

Leaning back in a corner, Algy resigned himself to the bitter thought that "Louise de la Croix" had fooled him most completely. She—his Saint of the Cross—was nothing but a brilliant thief, a thief with an imagination, and a turn for romance. That story of the poor soldier—"the poor Biscayan soldier"—must have been made up on the spur of the moment. He had been a fool to let her bewitch him. . . . Yet he hoped the police would never lay hands upon her.

"For, after all," he reflected, "she was deucedly pretty, and clever, and amusing; and that curve of her cheek in the profile was simply divine!"

A Momentous Occasion

When father goes to catch his morning train,
Along the hall we wait in anxious rows;
For not a soul can undisturbed remain
When father goes.

As minutes fly he more excited grows;
Some fetch his "topper," some his coat and cane.
Where is his bag?—his paper? No one knows!

Now up the road he runs; then back again
To plant a hasty kiss on Mother's nose. . . .
It drives a worried household half insane
When father goes!

Leslie Thomas.

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Telling of the Big Deed Accomplished by a Little Gold Knife.

LUCILLE, MARQUISE DE SAVIGNAC, was leaning wearily against the casement of a window in the hall of the Hotel de Ville, listlessly looking out on the market-place of the old French town of St. Nazaire. She was waiting in suspense, terrible suspense, for a promised interview with the Republican general, to plead for her husband's life.

A phase in the campaign of La Vendée had ended in the disastrous defeat of the French aristocracy. The Marquis, her husband, had escaped the general overthrow and, like many another of his order, was flying to England to join the *émigrés* already there. It was only last night she had met him, with two of his friends, near the outskirts of the town, making good their way to the coast, where she had arranged with the owner of a fishing boat to take them on board.

The skipper, Pierre Rouget, had been a servant on her father's estate when the great upheaval came. The *château* desolate, the family scattered, Pierre had taken to a seafaring life. His business on the waters was, perhaps, of a doubtful character, but he was a devoted servant to Madame la Marquise, whom he had known since her childhood. He was ready now to risk all to convey her and the Marquis to England. He was waiting day and night—in case the vigilance of the Republicans should have necessitated the fugitives remaining in hiding.

Up to a time everything had favoured the flight of the Marquis and his friends. They had cleared the town, they were nearing the shore, when there came the sound of galloping hoofs along the road, and—they were prisoners in the hands of the Republicans.

The men were captives, pinioned, and with a file of Republican soldiers beside each. Lucille was told she was free, but had refused to go, and had walked the long night march by her husband's side.

On their arrival at St. Nazaire, the captives were brought before the General—sentenced to death, and removed to the prison; the trial of an aristocrat in the days of revolution was short shrift; the fact that he belonged to that hated class was equivalent to the signing of the

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death-warrant. The loss of more than one friend had brought this fact cruelly home to Lucille, and her heart sank as she now waited to see the officer in command. She had heard many a time of General Lourmel as a Republican of Republicans, and she feared her words would be of little avail. Utterly wearied, at length she sank down on the *banquette*, her fair head resting against the black oak paneling of the room.

There were dark circles round her brave blue eyes, and her young face was worn with anxiety. It was only two short years ago since she had left her home in fair Provence to marry Marcel. They had been so happy together in the old *château*. Then the Revolution broke out. Loyalty to the person of the King, and a wish to strike for the monarchy, had kindled the Marquis to join the Royal cause in La Vendée. For long Lucille had not seen him till last night, when he was a fugitive—a hapless fugitive.

The tears, the first she had shed since the news had been brought to her of the death sentence, began to roll slowly down her cheeks. The sound of an opening door roused her, and, passing her hand across her eyes, she turned towards the room. A soldier in the uniform of the National Guard was waiting to conduct her to the General's presence.

She rose and, with fearful heart, followed him into the inner chamber. A grey-haired man, with a stern, set face, rose and bowed, placing a chair for her.

"Monsieur, I have come to plead for my husband. He was but doing his duty fighting for the King, his master. Surely, monsieur, surely it is not true what I have been told, that he and his friends are to be shot at daybreak to-morrow?"

She leant forward with trembling, clasped hands.

"It is true, madame. That is the sentence."

The deep, mellow voice was indeed a strange contrast to the stern face. Hope stirred in Lucille's heart.

"But, monsieur, we are so young, and have been so short a time together. You will not take him from me?" she pleaded, her voice breaking into sobs.

The General did not reply at once. He was looking at her questioningly, as if recalling some memory. Then his face hardened.

"I am a servant of the Republic, and must carry out my duty. The nation has suffered cruelly at the hands of the aristocracy. Possibly Monsieur le Marquis is not more culpable than the others, but he must pay the penalty with the rest."

Lucille was desperate. What could she say or do that would touch the hard man before her? She must see Marcel again before the end. She would beg for a last interview.

"If you will not spare his life, you will at least not deny me a farewell with my husband?"

The General rose without replying, as if to indicate that the audience was at an end. His eyes rested a moment on the upturned face, and again the same questioning look came into them. Then, with a little impatient movement, he said almost roughly:

"I regret to have to cause you further pain, but an interview is against orders, and impossible for me to allow."

She sprang up with wide open eyes of anguish and stretched out her arms.

"Have pity! Have you never cared for anyone? Can you have *no* feeling for my sorrow?"

Her long cloak had fallen back, showing her slight, girlish figure clad in a simple grey gown, with a white kerchief folded at the throat, and hanging from her waist a gold chatelaine—a strange touch of brightness against her quiet attire. Of very beautiful workmanship—the design probably of the sixteenth century—it had been for many years an heirloom in the family. Lucille herself had received it from her mother's own hands. There were several quaint trinkets on it, the most remarkable being a small knife, with a beautifully embossed gold haft. It was of comparatively modern design, and had been fastened by Lucille's mother, when a girl, amongst the older ornaments.

The glint of gold caught the man's eyes. He started slightly, and his face softened strangely.

"Madame, pray pardon me, but that knife on your chatelaine! I have never seen one like it but once—many years ago. Will you allow me to look at it?"

Amazed beyond measure, Lucille unfastened the knife from the chain and put it in his hands. He took it to the window and examined it closely. She saw him turn it over.

A sharp exclamation broke from him, and he came to her side.

"The name?" he questioned hoarsely, pointing to one on the haft.

"'Lucille.' It was my mother's."

A silence fell, so absolute that she could hear the voices of the people in the market-

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place far below. She watched him wonderingly as he turned and walked to the end of the long room. What was it that had so agitated this stern old man?

Up and down, up and down he paced. The suspense was cruel. The precious moments were flying. They seemed to be taking Marcel from her.

At length the General stopped.

"I will make an exception in your favour," he said kindly, handing her back the knife, "but I can only allow a few minutes, and the sentry on guard must be present."

He opened the door, bowing courteously as she passed out with words of grateful thanks on her lips.

Lucille walked as one in a dream to her room in the hotel. Could she do nothing? Her friends were scattered; there was no one to help. To-morrow Marcel would be shot! Only a few short hours! Wild schemes passed through her mind, only to be set aside as impracticable. She began to pace the room with feverish steps, the horror of despair growing on her at each movement. At last, sinking on her knees, she lifted her clasped hands in prayer, her pale lips pleading in an agony of grief to One who is ever ready to hear and help.

"The name?" he questioned hoarsely, pointing to one on the haft.

Gradually peace stole into her heart. She rose, and, seating herself at the table, leant her head on her hand, striving to think. Was there no way of escape for Marcel and his friends? Pierre Rouget would wait for them, she felt sure of that. If only they could reach the shore! Then her thoughts wandered to the General. How strangely he had behaved when he saw the knife! Some memory, doubtless.

She took the knife in her hand. It was her dear mother's gift to her—that mother long since dead. What a quaint little trinket it was—but of no use.

She raised her head quickly. Of no use? A sudden thought made her eyes bright, and set her heart pulsing with hope.

The prison where the Marquis De Savignac and his friends were confined was merely a

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stable. The door had been made secure with bolts and bars, and, as an additional precaution against escape, the prisoners' arms were pinioned. There was no light, save for some faint, straggling moonbeams that stole through a small window in the roof. A bench and a deal table occupied the centre of the room, and against the wall were some heaps of straw intended for bedding.

Seated on the bench was a man of middle age, of haughty bearing and vigorous frame. On the straw lay one of his fellow captives in motionless indifference or apathy. The third, the youngest, was pacing the floor impatiently. On him the eyes of the watcher on the bench were bent with some solicitude.

"I am more sorry for you, De Savignac," said the elder at length, "than for D'Aulnoy or myself. My family and his are, I trust, safe in England, but you are leaving the Marquise here."

"I know!" De Savignac stopped in his walk and turned to his friend, his pleasant, manly face haggard with grief. "I know you feel for me, De Noyal. You can imagine what I am going through. Rouget will have his boat ready—for us; and—and I trust she will go to him—when all is over—to-morrow. If I could but see her once more. D'Aulnoy!" He turned almost fiercely to the man on the straw. "D'Aulnoy, you are an old campaigner. You have seen the rough side of life, even before this unhappy war. Can nothing be done? Can't you *think*, man?"

Before the other could reply, the bolts of the door were shot back and the sentry entered. He swaggered to the middle of the room and set down the lantern he was carrying on the table.

D'Aulnoy raised his head.

"Leave us, you dog! We prefer to be alone."

The man laughed.

"You have not much time left," he jeered.

He stepped back. In the doorway, in the light of the lantern, was the slight figure of a woman. She had pushed back her hood. They could see the burnished gold of her hair as she bent forward, gazing into the darkness.

"Marcel!" she cried, a sob in her voice.

"Lucille!"

De Savignac sprang forward.

"Your poor arms still tied!" she cried pitifully. "How you must be suffering!"

"No, dear. Never mind that. It is of you, only you, I am thinking. My little one! How can I leave you—here—alone? It is the worst of all I have to face. We have no friends here except Pierre Rouget. Go to him. He will take you to England."

She did not answer; only clinging to him with heartbreaking sobs.

He spoke again.

"By-and-by, when all is quiet, you will return to France—to Savignac."

"No! no! I cannot go there!" Her voice was raised in piteous pain.

"But yes, dear. It is our home, and there will be much for you to do there for my sake. It must be very beautiful now," he continued musingly. "Do you remember," he went on soothingly, "the terrace under the chestnut trees, where we always walked in the old days, and watched the sun go down?"

His thoughts seemed to be in another world. She was crying quietly now.

"You must not fret, love, for me," he said tenderly. "It is better to die thus than on the guillotine, jeered at by the mob."

The sentry's voice broke in harshly.

"Now, citizen, you must go."

"No! no! Marcel! Marcel!"

She was clinging round his neck.

"Lucille, be brave, dear. We must part now, but, little one, it is not for always—remember."

With an effort she checked her tears.

"Listen!" she whispered.

He stooped lower.

"When I kiss you, be careful. Watch! It may be of use."

Loosening her clasp from his neck, she pressed her fingers to her bosom with a quick movement; then buried her face in her hands, but only for a moment. Folding her arms round her husband, she kissed him lingeringly on the lips.

A heavy hand on her arm made her start, and the sentry, seizing her roughly, almost dragged her from the prison. His coarse laugh was heard as he shot the bolts with spiteful energy.

No sooner had the door been shut and the footsteps died away, than De Savignac turned quickly to his friends. The moonlight fell full on him, and, to their surprise, his haggard face was lit up with what seemed to them like hope. Then they saw he was holding a small gold knife between his teeth.

He knelt to the level of D'Aulnoy's bound hands.

"Take it!" he said.

D'Aulnoy gropingly found it, and De Savignac opened the blade with his teeth.

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It was the work of a few seconds for De Savignac and D'Aulnoy to gag and bind him, whilst De Noyal stood by, the man's bayonet to his throat, ready.

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Then, standing back to back, the two slowly worked the edge through the cords—and De Savignac's arms were free. They were so stiff at first that there was scarcely any power in them, but vigorous action soon restored the circulation, and in a few minutes his friends were released.

What was to be done? They spoke in whispers. In a short time they knew the sentry would return with their last meal. It was then they must escape. To wait till the guard was changed would entail too great a risk; their bonds might be examined—then!

The time, a few short minutes, seemed interminable. Then came the regular sound of heavy footsteps—the sentry's. In a moment they slipped the cords over their arms, and shrank away into the deepest shadow of the room. The man came in and gave a perfunctory glance round. Then, leaning his musket against the wall and placing his lantern on the threshold, he brought in their supper—a dish of coarse food and a jug of water.

As he turned to place these on the table, De Savignac sprang on him and brought him to the ground. In falling his head struck the bench, and for a moment he was stunned. It was the work of a few seconds for De Savignac and D'Aulnoy to gag and bind him, whilst De Noyal stood by, the man's bayonet to his throat, ready. Then the lantern was extinguished, the door bolted and barred, and they ran rapidly towards the sea.

Guided by the low moaning of the waves, distinctly heard through the still night air, they soon covered the short distance to the beach.

Against a boat on the water's edge a man was leaning, apparently asleep. As the sound of fugitive footsteps drew near, he raised his head. In another moment he had pushed out to sea, whilst the three gentlemen, half wading, half swimming, clambered, one after another, into the light craft.

In a few strokes they had pulled alongside a fishing boat. Just as they reached her, a line of fire ran along the beach and the sound of musketry was heard, but they were beyond range.

"Madame la Marquise was on board?" De Savignac looked anxiously along the deck. "No!" Rouget had not seen her. De Savignac commanded, threatened, expostulated; nothing could prevail on Rouget to return. He would take them, he insisted, to England, and then fetch madame. She would go to Jeanne, his wife, at the inn. Jeanne would take every care of her. Monsieur must calm himself; madame would be in despair if she found monsieur were still in France. Madame knew where to find Jeanne; he had told her only yesterday.

* * * * *

As the dawn broke over the grey sea and lit up the prison, it showed the figure of a woman lying wearily on the straw. It was Lucille, fast asleep, worn out with the intense suspense. She had waited about, keeping in sight of the prison, hiding now and again when anyone approached. She saw the sentry enter. She saw the three men rush out and dash towards the beach. She was about to follow, when out of the darkness behind her rose an angry challenge, and the next moment a patrol passed her in hot pursuit of the fugitives. She heard the shots, and then—nothing.

Half fainting with fear she leant against the trunk of a tree by which she had been watching. How long she remained thus she knew not, when a hand was laid on her arm. It was one of the soldiers returning from the chase. What was she doing there? he demanded. He supposed she had something to do with the rascals who had escaped.

Escaped! A quick exclamation of thankfulness broke from her. She heeded nothing now. The arrival of the rest of the patrol, her arrest on suspicion, the return to the prison, the release of the sentry who was found mute and helpless on the floor, his eager identification of her as the woman he had taken to see the prisoners—all these things passed as in a dream. Even his brutal threat, "she'll be shot in the morning instead of the dogs that got away!" carried no sting.

Lying down on the straw she slept on till a file of men came to take her before the General. She started up, wondering and in fear, and then a glad light came into her face as she remembered Marcel was safe. The shots, she knew, had failed. It was the first question the sentry had asked on his release, and the answer had been absolutely reassuring to her. Still, she was very weary, and, as she drew nearer General Lourmel's quarters, the fear of the sentry's threat gripped her closer and closer.

She could hardly drag herself along, and, on reaching the ante-room, dropped wearily down on the window-seat where only a few short hours before she had waited to plead for the life of Marcel.

Would she have to plead now for her own? Would they shoot her as the soldier had said?

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If they should do so, as they had done already to many a woman, perhaps the General could be induced to send a message to the *château,* and, in time, Marcel would know. Alas! she did not know her beautiful home had been confiscated and was now—a barrack. Would her eyes be bandaged, she wondered, and her hands tied? She shuddered. She would beg them not to cover her eyes.

To be shot! The words rang in her ears over and over again, filling her with terror. But Marcel was safe, and hereafter she would meet him. So absorbed was she that she did not hear the step or voice of the soldier who had come to fetch her to the General. He had to touch her before she was aware of his presence. She cried out in her fear, then, realising that she was to go, rose and obeyed.

The General bowed, and pointed to a chair without raising his eyes. When they were alone, he said sternly:

"And so, madame, this is the way you repay the indulgence I granted. This escape was your doing. I have proofs."

"Oh, monsieur, you surely cannot blame me for using the means I had. I hardly dared hope for success. Indeed, when I left you, there seemed no chance of escape. It was only afterwards, when I was thinking and thinking, an idea came. Monsieur, forgive me—you cannot blame."

He looked up. There was no question now, as his gaze rested on her beautiful, pale face. He knew where he had seen those starlike eyes before His thoughts turned to an old-fashioned garden with its stiff borders and quaintly cut trees by that old *château* in Provence. He could see the Lucille of his young days in the rose-garden coming shyly towards him with her hands full of flowers, her glorious eyes full of light. It was many years ago when he was a poor lieutenant of Artillery, and then—Lucille was told it was impossible and that they must part. He had heard, afterwards, that she had made a *mariage de convenance,* and so his life had ended. And now, after all those years, here, in the room, Lucille was speaking.

"Monsieur! Is it true I am to be shot? If so," her voice broke, "in your kindness will you send word to the Château de Savignac to tell—to tell my husband of my joy in his escape, and that I died bravely, as he would wish me."

The General laid his hand gently on hers.

"No. You will not be shot," he said.

Lucille leant back in the chair with a long-drawn sigh of intense relief. A silence fell.

"You want to join your husband?" said the General at length. "Well, well! I must see to it myself, for there must be the utmost secrecy. I will get you off to-night. And see, here is my proof of your connivance," he ended with a slight smile, holding out a little gold knife towards her. "It was found on the floor of the prison. You would like to have it back?"

He was still keeping it in his hand, as if loth to part with it.

"I gave it to your mother when she and I were young."

Lucille looked up quickly. His face was pale and grave with sad memories.

"Monsieur, if you would keep it it would be a happiness to me."

She clasped his hand in both of hers. The flood of her gratitude was trembling on her quivering lips.

"No, don't thank me," he said, "it is for your mother's sake. I loved her."

A STEALTHY DEED.

He crouched beneath a friendly bush,
His weapon lying near,
And gazed with set and eager eyes
Along the pathway clear.

He muttered: "Half-a-dozen times
At her I've tried a shot;
But every time she was alarmed,
So I succeeded not.

"But very soon, beyond all doubt,
She'll come along this way;
From here I'll get a lovely shot—
I shall not miss to-day."

His hapless victim came at last,
A maiden sweet and fair;
Unconscious of the stealthy foe
That lurked so near her there.

Still on she came, and gaily sang,
Her heart with joy elate;
Could nothing warn her, even now,
Of her impending fate?

Alas! no angel intervened,
And soon the deed was done;
He raised his snap-shot camera—
At last success was won.

Herbert J. Brandon.

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CAP AND BELLS

HAD BEEN STUDYING.

"Father, you have frequently advised me to emulate the busy bee."

"Yes, my son!"

"Well, I've concluded to follow your advice. I have just read here, from one of the most distinguished scientists of the age, that the busy bee never works more than three hours a day."

* * * * *

HIS REQUEST.

They sat beneath a shelt'ring palm,
So closely side by side,
The maiden full of hope that he
Would ask her for his bride.

At length he broke the silence strange
That fell upon them there.
Said he: "I wish you would not call
Me 'Mr. Smith,' Miss Clare!"

"This is so sudden," she exclaimed.
"Oh, not at all," said he;
"My name has been Smith-*Robin*son
Since 1893."

Marion Weller.

* * * * *

AN EASIER TASK.

"Madam, I must request you to remove your hat," remarked the polite theatre attendant.

The lady smiled grimly.

"Does my hat annoy the little man behind me?"

"Yes, madam."

"Then you'll find it much easier to remove him."

ON THE WATCH.

In the barber's shop the scissors clicked merrily away, and the barber's dog lay on the floor close behind the chair, looking up intently all the time at the occupant, who was having his hair cut.

"Nice dog, that," said the customer.

"He is, sir," said the barber.

"He seems very fond of watching you cut hair."

"It ain't that, sir," explained the barber smiling. "Sometimes I make a mistake and take a little piece off a customer's ear."

* * * *

IN THE CHEMICAL LABORATORY.

"Professor, what has become of Tom Appleton? Wasn't he studying with the class last year?"

"Ah, yes. Appleton — poor fellow! A fine student, but absent minded in the use of chemicals—very. That discoloration on the ceiling—notice it?"

"Yes."

"That's he."

A wily old man from the Bosphorus
Was commissioned to purchase a hosphorus,
Made off with the money
Which we didn't think funny,
For it meant a considerable losphorus.

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SORRY HE SPOKE.

MR. PECK: "I had a funny dream last night. It seemed that I was away in South Africa, where diamonds were lying all around me in heaps."

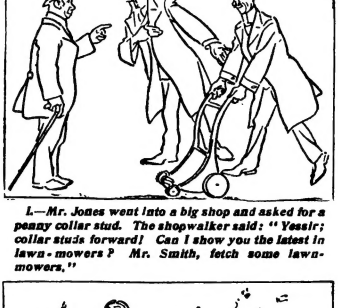
MRS. PECK: "Did you seem to see any as small as the one in the engagement ring you gave me?"

* * * * *

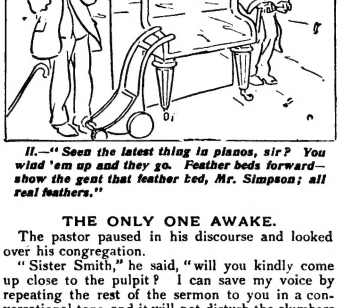
NOTHING SIMPLER.

"I am just thinking how I can encourage my boy to cut out a name for himself."

"Give him a sharp knife and a school desk."



I.—Mr. Jones went into a big shop and asked for a penny collar stud. The shopwalker said: "Yessir; collar studs forward! Can I show you the latest in lawn-mowers? Mr. Smith, fetch some lawn-mowers."



II.—"Seen the latest thing in pianos, sir? You wind 'em up and they go. Feather beds forward—show the gent that feather bed, Mr. Simpson; all real feathers."

THE ONLY ONE AWAKE.

The pastor paused in his discourse and looked over his congregation.

"Sister Smith," he said, "will you kindly come up close to the pulpit? I can save my voice by repeating the rest of the sermon to you in a conversational tone, and it will not disturb the slumbers of the others."

* * * * *

HARD LUCK!

Naturalists say that a cockroach has 3000 teeth. What an awful time the baby cockroaches must have when teething!

WILLING TO OBLIGE.

THE WIDOW: "No, Mr. Packer, I can't marry you now. I am engaged to Mr. Stockyards, but if you wish, I will put you on my waiting list."

* * * * *

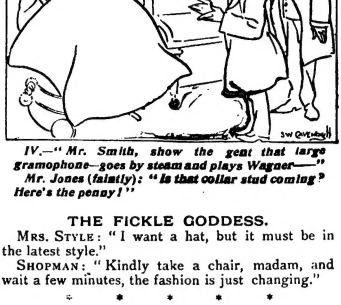
A "LIVELY" BOOK.

"Yes, I picked up his book last night, and I never moved out of my chair until four o'clock this morning."

"Goodness! Was it so interesting?"

"No; but I didn't wake up until that time."

III.—"Let me show you this alarm clock—only 11½d.—warranted for twenty years. Fetch in some wire netting, Mr. Simpson."



IV.—"Mr. Smith, show the gent that large gramophone—goes by steam and plays Wagner——" Mr. Jones (faintly): "Is that collar stud coming? Here's the penny!"

THE FICKLE GODDESS.

MRS. STYLE: "I want a hat, but it must be in the latest style."

SHOPMAN: "Kindly take a chair, madam, and wait a few minutes, the fashion is just changing."

* * * * *

ONLY ONE PAIR.

MAMMA: "Why, Johnny, what is the matter?"

JOHNNY: "M-my new s-shoes hurt my f-feet."

MAMMA: "No wonder, dear, you have them on the wrong feet."

JOHNNY: "W-well, I c-can't help it. I ain't got no other f-feet. Boo-hoo-oo!"

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"I am really delighted at the interest my boy Tommy is taking in his writing," said Mrs. Hickelby; "he spends two hours a day at it."

"Really? How strange! How did you get him to do it?"

"Oh, as for that, I told him to write me out a list of everything he wanted for Xmas, and he's still at it."

RUBBING IT IN.

OLD SKINEM: "Huh! So you want to marry my daughter, eh?"

YOUNG MAN: "Well, that's about it."

OLD SKINEM: "Um—yes. Can you support her in the style to which she has been accustomed?"

YOUNG MAN: "I can—but I'm not mean enough to do it."

* * * * *

GOOD ADVICE.

"You must always," said a butter-dealer to his assistant, "put in a couple of sheets of paper when you weigh. Customers will think you neat and cleanly. They don't like to have their butter slopped on a scale that, for all they know, has never been washed. And, besides, there's a good profit in buying paper at a halfpenny a pound and selling it for fifteenpence."

* * * *

A GOOD EXAMPLE.

PASSENGER: "Doesn't the vessel tip frightfully?"

STEWARD: "The vessel is trying to set a good example to the passengers."

* * * *

GEORGIE'S REVENGE.

"Oh, Georgie! Who opened the canary's cage?"

"I did. You told me a little bird was whispering to you when I was naughty, so I knew it must be him, as there was no other little bird about. So I opened the cage and the cat's eaten him. That's what he's got for splitting on me."

* * * *

ENCOURAGING.

"May I read you my last poem?"

"You may, if it really is."

THE ADVANCE OF SCIENCE.

DOCTOR: "Troubled with insomnia, eh? Eat something before going to bed."

HUSBAND: "Why, doctor, you once told her never to eat anything before going to bed."

DOCTOR (with dignity): "That, my dear sir, was in 1895. Science has made great strides since then."

* * * * *

EASILY SETTLED.

SCENE: A RUSSIAN BALLROOM. "Sir, you have just stepped on my partner's foot. I demand satisfaction!"

"Oh, certainly. Yonder sits my wife—go and step on her foot."

* * * * *

NOT FOR HIM.

"Did you ever try to ride a bicycle, Captain Barnacles?"

"Do you think," roared the sailor, "that I would be found aboard a craft that had its rudder in front?"

PLENTY ABOUT.

"You haven't any smokeless tobacco about, have you?" asked the smart young man.

"Lots of it," said the matter-of-fact person behind the counter, producing a box of snuff. "How much do you want?"

WHAT HE'D LIKE.

A tramp applied to a gentleman for a few pence to buy some bread.

"Can't you go into any business that is more profitable than this?" he was asked.

"I'd like to open a bank if I could only get the tools," answered the tramp.

* * * *

NO GOOD AFTERWARDS.

"Did you send any of Jimmy's old toys to the children's hospital?"

"No. When Jimmy finishes with them, you wouldn't know they had ever been toys."

Mrs. Snooper: "I wonder if it is true, as Dr. Jacobi says, that the baby of to-day has a better chance of living than the baby of fifty years ago?"

Snooper: "Certainly it is. The baby of fifty years ago is half-a-century old now."

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"Oh, if you please, Mr. Graves, will you go down on your hands and knees? I want to draw a pig."

HE DIDN'T COUNT.

"How many fellows have called on your sister this week?"

"Five."

"That doesn't include me, does it?"

"Oh, no. Sister says you don't count."

* * * * *

WILLIE'S HOPE.

Willie drank a pint of yeast
In spite of friendly warning—
"I hope," said he, "this will make me
Rise early in the morning."

* * * * *

TOO MUCH IN IT.

Bridget (the new waiting-maid) recently had occasion to open a bottle of champagne for the first time in her life, it appears.

"Begorra!" she exclaimed, as the wine gushed forth; "the idjut that filled this quart bottle must have put in a gallon by mistake."

ALTERED AT NIGHT.

BROWNE: "Have you much furniture in your house?"

TOWNE: "Day time or night time?"

BROWNE: "What's the difference?"

TOWNE: "You'd know the difference if you tried to walk through my house in the dark."

* * * * *

MOST UNFORTUNATE.

At a wedding feast recently the bridegroom was called upon, as usual, to respond to the given toast, in spite of the fact that he had previously pleaded to be excused.

Blushing to the roots of his hair, he rose to his feet. He intended to imply that he was unprepared for speech making, but he unfortunately placed his hand on the bride's shoulder, and looked down at her as he stammered out his opening and concluding words:

"This—er—thing has been forced upon me."

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

A Few Words of Advice.

WRITING AND BREAD AND BUTTER.

I HAVE often said in these pages that nothing gives me greater pleasure than to read the efforts of would-be authors, be they poets, fiction writers, or playwrights, and I am glad to say that lately a great many readers have taken me at my word and sent me their efforts; not so much for publication as for my opinion on their merits.

Many of these MSS. were accompanied with letters, asking me whether I thought the author justified in trying his luck at making a living with his pen. In most cases, I may say, I replied by advising the would-be authors, even when their efforts showed undoubted promise, not on any account to throw up the position they occupied for so precarious a means of earning a livelihood as authorship offers.

For the possession of the literary instinct, unless you happen to be an extraordinary genius, does not by any means guarantee success. You must have in addition a large stock of common-sense, a gift for discovering what the public require, untiring industry, and the energy of a steam-engine. And I am bound to say that all these excellencies are seldom combined in the composition of a born author. Too many young writers write entirely as the mood takes them and to please themselves and not the public or the editors and publishers to whom they send their efforts. To make your own public and create a taste are triumphs reserved for the divinely gifted few.

I know several young people who might go far in the literary world if only they had a little common-sense in their composition.

On the other hand, I come across very many men and women who make a good thing out of writing, and possess very little literary power. But they possess common-sense and can adapt themselves to circumstances.

So don't throw up your berth for the pen until you have made your literary position secure.

POETRY AND BREAD AND BUTTER.

One of these aspiring authors, who wanted to live on his pen, sent me as a specimen of his work a four-stanza poem—nothing more. Of course, I told him to stick to the business he was in; an insurance office, if I am not mistaken. But it does not do to laugh at his ingenuous question simply because comic papers joke largely about the starving poet. Poetry, as I have often pointed out, is not a drug on the market. Personally, I should not care to keep a wife and a family of six on verses. Nevertheless, a man may make quite a decent sum per annum verse writing—if only he brings common-sense to bear on his work. I know of at least two men who make a very decent income writing songs, and of many more who earn by rhyming more than enough to pay for a sumptuous holiday.

But, my dear poets, pray do not take this as an encouragement to throw up your post and start making your livelihood writing odes! The instances of successful poets which I have just quoted are the exceptions which prove the rule that poetry, though not a drug on the market, is a very precarious method of winning bread and butter.

A MODEL STORY.

I want all of you to read a story which appears in next month's issue, entitled "Almost Snared"; and especially do I commend it to those who wish to write for my pages. It is of its kind one of the best stories I have lately come across, and exactly suited to my requirements. The style is clear and concise, the plot ingenious, but not over complex and subtle, and, above all, the working out is splendidly accomplished. Right from the first paragraph up to the last line the interest is not only maintained but steadily heightened.

Read that story carefully through. It is a lesson how one should write for a popular magazine.

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